







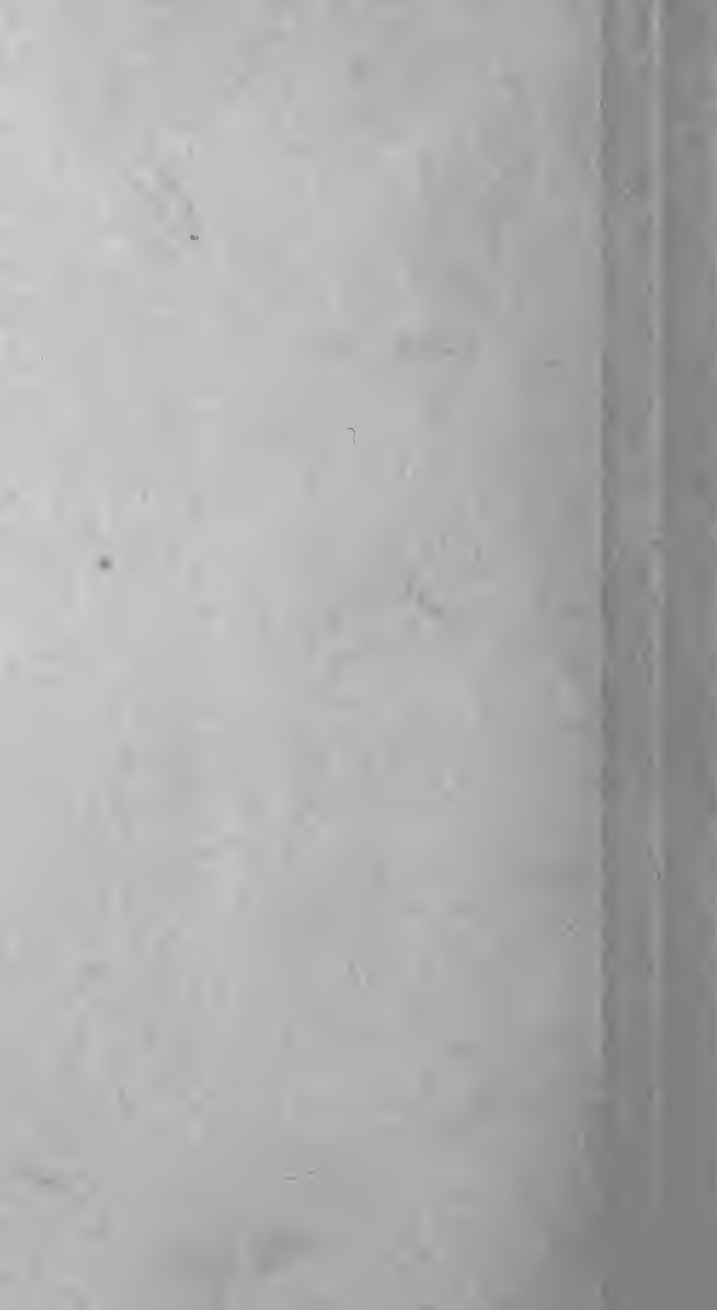


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Washington Aug. 11th
1840

Sir
(I have recd from the author
of the reconnaissance "History of West
Point" several copies for distribution,
and take the liberty to forward one
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A SKETCH
OF THE
HISTORY AND TOPOGRAPHY
OF
WEST POINT
AND THE
U. S. MILITARY ACADEMY.

"The means by which wars, as well for defence as offence, are now carried on, render these schools of the more scientific operations an indispensable part of every adequate system."

MADISON.

BY ROSWELL PARK, A. M.



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1840.

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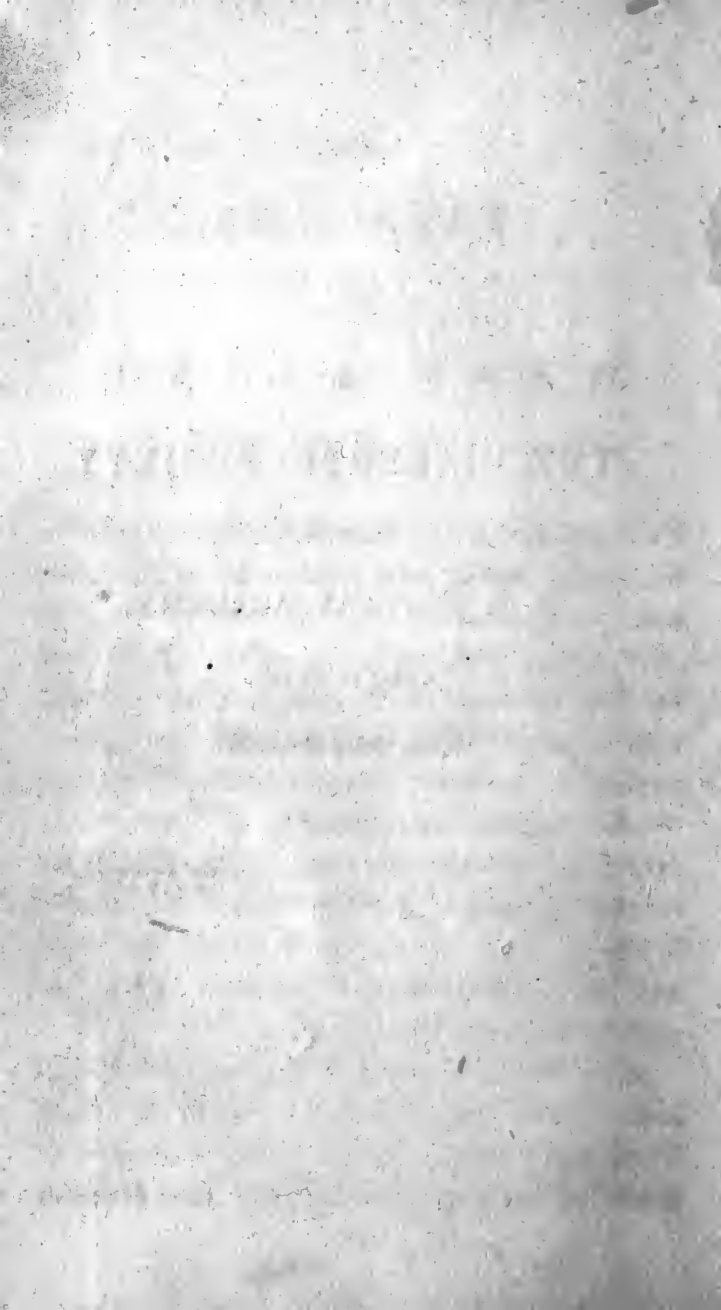
TO
THE DIALECTIC SOCIETY
OF THE
U. S. MILITARY ACADEMY,

THESE PAGES ARE

Respectfully Inscribed

BY

THE AUTHOR.



THE HISTORY

OF

WEST POINT.

FEW places in our own country, or even in the wide world, are connected with more interesting associations than that which it is our present purpose to describe. Hallowed by the footsteps of Washington and Kosciuszko, adorned by nature with surpassing variety of scenery, consecrated by a nation to the Spartan-like training of her chosen youth for military service, and secluded as it were purposely for retirement and study, it seems alike calculated to please the sage and the hero, to elevate the soul, and to inspire it with patriotic emotions.

West Point is situated among the Highlands about fifty-five miles north of New York city; being, as its name indicates, a point of land projecting into the Hudson

river on the west side. It seems to have interrupted the southward course of the Hudson, which on meeting and fronting it, turns suddenly to the east, forming an elbow, until, having passed the obstacle, it resumes its previous course. The eastern margin of West Point is a straight precipitous shore; while the northern side has a more gentle slope, and commands the view up the river. On the opposite side, towards the north, is a corresponding rocky projection, connected by a salt marsh with the eastern shore, and known by the name of Constitution Island. West Point, properly so called, is chiefly a level plain, widest on the north, narrowing towards the south, and flanked on the west by rocky heights, of which Mount Independence, the site of Fort Putnam, is the nearest and most prominent. The plain contains about one hundred and sixty acres; and is about one hundred and sixty feet above the level of the river, being highest at the north-eastern angle, the site of Fort Clinton.

Looking from West Point towards the north, the fine town of Newburgh, eight miles distant, is seen through the wild vista

formed by the rupture of the Highland range, where the Hudson passes through what might be appropriately termed the Water Gap of the Highlands. On the east side of this Gap is Bull's Hill, and farther north Breakneck Hill, beyond which is the village of Fishkill. On the west side of the Gap is the Crow's Nest, and farther north Butter Hill, beyond which, near the river, are the villages of New Windsor and Canterbury. A road leads westward from West Point, breaking through the mountains, known as the Canterbury road; and another runs southward, not far from the shore, leading to Forts Montgomery on the north side, and Clinton on the south side of Polopen's Creek, at its entrance into the Hudson, six miles south of West Point. South of these forts, about six miles farther, is the memorable Stony Point; between which and the preceding forts is the hill called Dunderberg or Thunder Hill. Below West Point, on the east side, is the mountain called Anthony's Nose, about six miles distant; and one mile south of it is Fort Independence, east of which lies the village of Peekskill. Verplanck's Point, about ten miles

south of West Point, is nearly opposite to Stony Point, connecting with it by King's Ferry. The margin of the river opposite to West Point is a high level plain, but at some distance farther east is Sugar Loaf Hill, between which and Anthony's Nose was Continental Village, about five miles southeast of West Point. Buttermilk Falls are about a mile and a half below West Point, on the west side; and Robinson's House, about two miles below on the east side, was for some time Washington's head-quarters. Opposite to West Point, towards the northeast, are extensive iron works, and between these and Bull's Hill, on the north, is the village of Cold Spring. On the northwestern slope of West Point, fronting a slight bay of the river, is the suburb or hamlet called Camp Town, including buildings erected for military store-houses during the revolution, and others now occupied by soldiers, and subordinates of the academy. Farther north, at the extremity of an elevated plain called the German Flats, is the West Point Cemetery; and just north of this, is a sequestered nook called Washington's Valley, in which formerly stood a house

actually occupied by Washington during a portion of the time of the Revolution. We have thus named the principal localities of this interesting region; but to describe its grandeur, and the wild and romantic beauty of its scenery, would far transcend the limits of this sketch, or the powers of our pen. They must be seen and dwelt upon, in order to be fully realized. The present buildings and localities of West Point proper, will be described in connexion with the Military Academy.

West Point proper was originally granted by the British Crown to Captain John Evans; but afterwards vacated and reassumed by the Crown, which finally granted it to Charles Congreve, May 17, 1723, on condition that it should be actually settled within three years from that date. Another portion, originally patented to Evans, adjoining the southwest corner of the preceding, was patented to John Moore, March 25, 1747, on a like condition of settlement within three years. The patent of Congreve having been purchased by Moore, both patents descended by will to Stephen Moore of North Carolina, by whom

they were deeded to the United States, September 10, 1790, in accordance with an Act of Congress of July 5, the same year. The tract adjoining Congreve's patent, on the south, was one of those granted to Gabriel and William Ludlow, October 18, 1731; and it was finally purchased by the United States from Oliver Gridley of New Jersey, May 13, 1824. The jurisdiction of West Point was ceded by New York to the United States, March 2, 1826; reserving the usual right of serving civil or criminal process there.

For information concerning the fortifications at West Point we are chiefly indebted to Sparks's Writings of Washington, a work of inestimable value. It appears that *Fort Constitution*, on the island or point of that name, was already in existence, in July, 1776; when General George Clinton garrisoned it, and collected sloops and boats there, to form a chain of them across the river, but with the intention of burning them, if the enemy should break through.^a His brother, Colonel James Clinton, had been stationed for several

^a Sparks, iii. 469.

weeks at Fort Constitution, superintending the construction of military works in the Highlands.^a In October of the same year, the same gentleman, then a brigadier-general in the continental service, was placed in command of the Highland posts.^b A chain was stretched across the river, opposite Fort Montgomery, as a barrier against the enemy's shipping; but this fell into the enemy's hands on their capture of Forts Montgomery and Clinton, October 6, 1777; and they having then the command of the river, Fort Constitution was evacuated by our troops. The enemy demolished Forts Constitution and Montgomery, but were repairing Fort Clinton, till the announcement of Burgoyne's capture, when they abandoned it, October 26, and sailed down the river.^c "On the 5th of November, 1777, Congress appointed General Gates to command in the Highlands, or rather connected that post with the northern department, and invested him with ample powers to carry on the works; but as he was soon after made President of the Board of War, he never entered upon these duties."^d

^a Sparks, iii. 469.

^b *Ib.* iv. 149.

^c *Ib.* v. 104 and 123.

^d *Ib.* v. 282.

The commander in the Highlands during this period was General Israel Putnam, who had been ordered there as early as May 24, 1777; and continued there until his command was suspended, and General McDougall ordered to succeed him, March 16, 1778.^a

On the 2d of December, 1777, Washington wrote to General Putnam concerning the importance of fortifying the North River, in order to secure the intercourse of the eastern states with the middle and southern, and to protect the country above the Highlands against farther ravages of the enemy. "Seize the present opportunity," said Washington, "and employ your whole force, and all the means in your power for erecting and completing, as far as it shall be possible, such works and obstructions as may be necessary to defend and secure the river against any future attempts of the enemy. You will consult Governor Clinton, General Parsons, and the French engineer, Colonel Radière, upon the occasion."^b Washington also wrote to General Gates, in general terms, and to Governor Clinton particularly on this subject;

^a Sparks, iv. 434; and v. 283.

^b *Ib.* v. 176, 7.

and the latter, in reply, December 20, 1777, recommended that a "strong fortress should be erected at West Point, opposite to Fort Constitution." This, says Mr. Sparks, "was probably the first suggestion, from any official source, which led to the fortifying of that post."^a Washington wrote again from Valley Forge, January 25, 1778, urging upon General Putnam the vigorous prosecution of the works on the North River.^b

Mr. Sparks states in a note,^c that "the forts and other works in the Highlands were entirely demolished by the British; and it now became a question of some importance, whether they should be restored in their former positions, or new places should be selected for that purpose. About the beginning of January, 1778, the grounds were examined by General Putnam, Governor Clinton, General James Clinton, and several other gentlemen, among whom was Radière, the French engineer; and they were all, except Radière, united in the opinion, that West Point was the most eligible place to be forti-

^a Sparks, v. 178.

^b *Ib.* v. 223.

^c *Ib.* v. 224.

fied. Radière opposed this decision with considerable vehemence, and drew up a memorial, designed to show that the site of Fort Clinton possessed advantages much superior to West Point. As the engineer was a man of science, and had the confidence of Congress and the commander-in-chief, it was deemed expedient by General Putnam to consult the Council and Assembly of New York, before he came to a final determination. A committee was appointed by those bodies, who spent three days reconnoitring the borders of the river in the Highlands, and they were unanimous in favour of West Point, agreeing herein with every other person authorized to act in the affair, except the engineer. It was accordingly decided, on the 13th of January, that the fortifications should be erected at West Point.”^a Colonel Radière was still, however, regarded as a valuable officer, and continued in the service of the United States till his death in 1780.^b

On the 13th of February, 1778, General Putnam wrote in reply to the commander-in-

^a Sparks, v. 224.

^b Ib. vi. 431.

chief, that the chain and necessary anchors were contracted for, and would probably be ready by the 1st of April; to which statement he added the following: "Parts of the boom intended to have been used at Fort Montgomery, sufficient for this place, are remaining. Some of the iron is exceedingly bad; this I hope to have replaced with good iron soon. The chevaux-de-frise will be completed by the time the river will admit of sinking them. The batteries near the water, and the fort to cover them, are laid out. The latter is, within the walls, six hundred yards around, twenty-one feet base, fourteen feet high, the *talus* two inches to the foot. This, I fear, is too large to be completed by the time expected. Governor Clinton and the committee have agreed to this plan, and nothing on my part shall be wanting to complete it in the best and most expeditious manner. Barracks and huts for about three hundred men are completed, and barracks for about the same number are nearly covered. A road to the river has been made with great difficulty."^a The fort here alluded to, was evi-

^a Sparks, v. 224, 5.

dently the *new* Fort Clinton, and the road was doubtless that leading down to Gee's Point, at the extreme angle of West Point.

On the 18th of February, 1778, Congress requested Governor Clinton to take the immediate charge of these fortifications; but his civil duties preventing this, the works, during General Putnam's absence in Connecticut, were left under the charge of General Parsons, till the arrival of General McDougall; who "took the command on the 28th of March. Two days previously, Kosciuszko arrived, who had been appointed engineer in the place of Radière. From that time the works were pressed forward with spirit. To the scientific skill and sedulous application of Kosciuszko, the public was mainly indebted for the construction of the military defences at West Point."^a It appears, however, that Radière did not leave immediately; since, on the 22d of April, Washington wrote from Valley Forge to General McDougall in the following terms. "As Colonel Radière and Colonel Kosciuszko will never agree, I think

^a Sparks, v. 282.

it will be best to order Radière to return, especially as you say Kosciuszko is better adapted to the genius and temper of the people.”^a We here take occasion to remark that Kosciuszko was educated in the military school of Warsaw, and afterwards studied in France. He came to America, recommended by Franklin to General Washington, whom it is said that he attended as an aide-de-camp. He was appointed an engineer, October 18, 1776, and planned General Gates’s encampment at Behmus’ Heights, in the campaign against Burgoyne.

On the 13th of April, 1778, General McDougall wrote that the fort was so nearly enclosed as to resist a sudden attack of the enemy; but the heights near it were such, that the fort would not be tenable if the enemy should possess them. “For this reason,” he added, “we are obliged to make some works on them. It will require five thousand men effectually to secure the grounds near the fort, which command it. And these objections exist against almost all the points on the river,

^a Sparks, v. 334.

proper for erecting works to annoy the shipping. Mr. Kosciuszko is esteemed by those who have attended the works at West Point, to have more practice than Colonel Radière, and his manner of treating the people is more acceptable than that of the latter; which induced General Parsons and Governor Clinton to desire the former may be continued at West Point.”^a It thus appears that Fort Putnam, as well as Fort Clinton, was commenced in the early part of 1778. The latter was doubtless named after Governor George Clinton; and Fort Putnam, according to Dr. Thacher, was so named “from the general who had the principal share in its plan and construction.”^b On the arrival of General Gates to command the northern department, General McDougall was ordered, April 22, to join the main army.^c

On the 19th of September, 1778, General Washington thus wrote from Fort Clinton to General Duportail, the chief engineer, “I have perused the memorial, which you delivered, relative to the defence of the North River at

^a Sparks, v. 311. ^b Thacher's Military Journal, p. 258.

^c Sparks, v. 333.

this place, and, upon a view of it, highly approve what you have offered upon the subject. Colonel Kosciuszko, who was charged by Congress with the direction of the forts and batteries, has already made such a progress in the constructing of them, as would render any alteration in the general plan a work of too much time, and the favourable testimony which you have given of Colonel Kosciuszko's abilities, prevents uneasiness on this head; but whatever amendments, subordinate to the general disposition, shall occur as proper to be made, you will be pleased to point out to Colonel Kosciuszko, that they may be carried into execution. The works proposed on the peninsula, not being subject to the above mentioned inconveniences, you will desire Colonel Kosciuszko to show you his plans for approbation, before he proceeds to the construction, or have them traced in the first instance conformably to your own ideas." ^a Soon after this, or prior to October 3d, Washington, ap-

^a Sparks, vi. 67, 8. General Duportail was appointed chief engineer, we believe, in the autumn of 1777; and continued in that station till he left the service, in the autumn of 1783. Sparks, v. 141.

prehending danger to West Point, ordered General Putnam to cross the river for its immediate security; but his stay there was short, as he was appointed to command at Danbury, Connecticut, in the following winter; and the command of West Point was assigned to General McDougall.^a In June, 1779, when the enemy took new possession of Stony Point, General McDougall was again transferred to the command at West Point, and three brigades were stationed on the opposite side of the river, under the command of General Heath, with orders to send parties across daily to work on the fortifications.^b

On the 21st of July, 1779, five days after the capture of Stony Point by General Wayne, Washington removed his head-quarters from New Windsor to West Point, and remained there till December, when the army went into winter quarters. "It was during this period," says Mr. Sparks, "that the strong works at West Point and its vicinity were chiefly constructed. Part of the time, two thousand five hundred men were daily on fatigue duty.

^a Sparks, vi. 75 and 125.

^b *Ib.* vi. 276.

The right wing of the army, consisting of the Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia troops, was commanded by General Putnam; the left wing, composed of the Connecticut brigades, and some of the Massachusetts regiments, was under General Heath, and posted in the Highlands on the east side of the river. The centre, or garrison of West Point, was under the immediate command of General McDougall."^a On the removal of head-quarters to Morristown, General Heath was left in command at West Point; and February 16, 1780, Washington wrote to him concerning the frequency of fires at that post; suggesting means for their prevention. He adds, "The posts at the Highlands are of so much consequence

^a Sparks, vi. 304. By an extract from Washington's Order-Book, it appears that on the 30th of July, 1779, the officers appointed to superintend the different works, were as follows. "Lieutenant-Colonel Howard, with Lieutenant Hugo as his assistant; the redoubts assigned to General Smallwood's brigade. Lieutenant-Colonel Williams, with Captain Gosner, Fort Putnam and Fort Webb. Colonel Tupper, with Captain Drew, the works at the Point, [including Fort Clinton]. Captain Hall and Captain Tatum, the works on Constitution Island. Major Troop, with Captain Holmes, the works on the east side of the river."

to the people of the State of New York, that I am convinced they will readily afford every assistance towards the safety and security of the works.”^a

In the spring of 1780, General Heath was appointed on recruiting service, and about the 13th of April, the command of West Point was entrusted to General Robert Howe.^b On the 1st of June, Washington wrote to General Howe, expressing his suspicions that the enemy meditated an attack on West Point; and on the 10th of June he added, “You do well to consider the post of West Point as the capital object of your attention, and every other as secondary. This is peculiarly necessary at the present moment, as there are circumstances that authorize a suspicion of something being intended against that post. I would therefore have you by all means keep your force collected in such a manner, that there may not be a possibility of your being found in a divided state, in case of a sudden movement of the enemy your way.” He added, “You will order

^a Sparks, vi. 467.

^b Ib. vii. 16.

Colonel Hay to detain the ship carpenters in his employ, even if the business now in hand should be finished; for we shall have essential need of their services hereafter.”^a

Again, on the 15th of June, Washington thus wrote to General Howe from Springfield, N. J. “If the enemy’s designs should be against this army, you may be useful to us, by making a demonstration in your quarter. I would therefore have you collect a number of boats at West Point, sufficient for two thousand men; put the garrison under moving orders with three days’ provisions; circulate ideas of having the militia ready for a sudden call,” &c.; the object being to alarm the enemy in New York city.^b Again, on the 21st of June, Washington wrote to General Howe, “From the immense importance of the post under your direction, I wish, as expressed in my letter of the 15th, that you may have and keep your force completed to two thousand five hundred efficient men.” The extracts here given will suffice to show the solicitude of Washington for the safety

^a Sparks, vii. 69 and 74, 5.

^b *Ib.* vii. 78.

of West Point ; and others of the same tenor, and of nearly the same date, are accordingly omitted.

On the 22d of June, 1780, Mr. Robert R. Livingston wrote to Washington, expressing his fears that General Howe, in case of an exigency, would not inspire sufficient confidence in the New York militia ; and soliciting the command for General Arnold. This was doubtless at the suggestion of the latter, who inspected the works at West Point on the 30th of June ; with what motives we may judge from the result. On the 29th of June, Washington wrote in reply to Mr. Livingston, saying, “ I am under no apprehension now of danger to the post at West Point, on the score either of provisions, the strength of the works, or of the garrison. I am sorry, however, to find there are apprehensions on account of the commandant, and that my knowledge of him does not enable me to form any decisive judgment of his fitness to command ; but as General McDougall and Baron Steuben, men of approved bravery, are both with him, and the main army is within supporting distance, I confess I have no fear on the

ground of what I presume is suspected. To remove him, therefore, under these circumstances, and at this period, must be too severe a wound to the feelings of any officer, to be given but in cases of real necessity.”^a It is unnecessary to add that these aspersions of a worthy character were unjust, and probably prompted by him who would have bartered his country’s freedom for base revenge or paltry gold.

On the 3d of August, Washington wrote in reply to a letter from Colonel Kosciuszko, saying, “The artificers are drawn from the post at West Point for a particular and temporary service only; and as there is a necessity for a gentleman in the engineering department to remain constantly at that post, and as you, from your long residence there, are particularly well acquainted with the nature of the works, and the plans for their completion, it was my intention that you should continue. The infantry corps was arranged before the receipt of your letter. The southern army, by the captivity of Gene-

^a Sparks, vii. 94, 5.

ral Duportail and the other gentlemen of that branch, is without an engineer ; and as you seem to express a wish for going there, rather than remaining at West Point, I shall, if you prefer it to your present appointment, have no objection to your going." This permission Kosciuszko immediately accepted.^a

On the same day last mentioned, August 3, 1780, Washington wrote from head-quarters at Peekskill, directing General Arnold to "proceed to West Point, and take the command of that post and its dependencies," extending from Fishkill to King's Ferry. This was in consequence of Arnold's dissatisfaction with his appointment to the command of the left wing of the main army, and the complaint that his wound would not allow him to act in the field.^b Washington wrote his last letter to Arnold on the 14th of September ; and on the 18th he set out for Hartford, to have an interview with Count de Rochambeau, and the Chevalier de Ternay ; meeting Arnold at King's Ferry on his way. He returned from Hartford, and reached Robin-

^a Sparks, vii. 141.

^b *Ib.* vii. 139.

son's House about noon on the 25th September; and not finding Arnold there, went over to West Point in the afternoon, but without finding him. On returning to Robinson's House towards evening, he discovered the plot, which, if perpetrated, would perhaps have been the death-blow to American independence. Arnold had just escaped; his boat having been hardly out of sight when Washington first arrived. The latter immediately wrote to Colonel Wade, then senior officer at West Point, to assume the command and be vigilant; as also to Major Low at Fishkill; to Lieutenant-Colonel Livingston at Stony Point; to Lieutenant-Colonel Jameson, who then had the custody of Major André; and to Lieutenant-Colonel Gray and General Greene, directing the latter to advance their respective forces, for the safety of West Point.^a The particulars of Arnold's treason and escape, and of André's capture and execution, are too voluminous and too well known, to require to be here repeated; but they will be found at some length in the

^a Sparks vii. 212, 19.

Encyclopædia Americana ; in Marshall's Life of Washington ; and especially in Sparks's Life and Treason of Benedict Arnold, vol. iii. of the Library of American Biography. We will only add that André was taken at Tarrytown, September 23d ; sent to Salem on the same day ; thence to West Point on the 26th ; and on the 28th, he was sent to Tappan, then the head-quarters of the American army. He was examined on the 29th, condemned on the 30th, and executed as a spy on the 2d of October, deeply lamented even by his captors. The dispositions made by Arnold, in dispersing the troops, distributing them in dangerous gorges, and leaving the passes feebly guarded, were such that, but for Providential interference, West Point must have fallen into the hands of the enemy.

On the 27th of September, 1780, General McDougall was placed in command of West Point, till the arrival of General St. Clair ; who was instructed on the 1st of October to relieve him from that command.^a On the 5th of October, General Greene wrote to Wash-

^a Sparks, vii. 221, 2.

ington, soliciting the command of West Point; which was conferred upon him on the following day. He was directed to exert himself to complete the works, and to put them in the most perfect state of defence; and Lieutenant-Colonel Gouvion was ordered to join him for this purpose with his corps.^a On the 14th of October, 1780, General Greene having been appointed, at the request of the southern states, to command the southern army, the command of West Point was entrusted to General Heath; who arrived on the 16th, and continued there through the following winter, so memorable for the distress of all the troops, and the consequent mutiny of the Pennsylvania line.^b On the 19th of August, 1781, General Heath was entrusted with the command of the whole department, including West Point; and he remained in command of that post until the following year.^c But on the 29th of August, 1782, General Knox was appointed to the command of West Point, and instructed to pay particular attention to the public build-

^a Sparks, vii. 232, 3.

^b *Ib.* vii. 259 and 374.

^c *Ib.* viii. 136.

ings then in progress, and to the alterations and repairs of the works.^a

On the 24th of June, 1783, after the conclusion of the war, Washington thus wrote from Newburgh to the President of Congress. "The army being thus reduced to merely a competent garrison for West Point, that being the only object of importance in this quarter, and it being necessary to employ a considerable part of the men in building an arsenal and magazines at that post, agreeably to the directions given by the secretary at war, the troops accordingly broke up the cantonment yesterday, and removed to that garrison, where General Knox still retains the command."^b

General Knox, with the troops under his command, was ordered to New York to receive the surrender of that city when it was evacuated by the British, on the 25th of November, 1783; but they soon returned to West Point, where he continued his headquarters, and was engaged in the preservation of the ordnance and other military stores,^c until he was relieved, as we are

^a Sparks, viii. 339, 40.

^b *Ib.* viii. 456, 7.

^c *Ib.* viii. 499 and 502, 3.

otherwise informed, by Captain Fleming with a guard of twelve men. This was probably not long before he was appointed Secretary of War by Congress, in 1785; which office he filled during the first six years of Washington's administration.

It appears that a petition was presented to Congress, by Stephen Moore, of North Carolina, that the United States would purchase West Point, which had already been so long occupied for public purposes. On this petition, General Hamilton, then Secretary of the Treasury, made a favourable report, June 10, 1790. He quoted the opinion of General Knox, the Secretary of War, as stated by him in a report to Congress, on the 31st of July, 1786, that West Point is of the most decisive importance to the defence of the Hudson river, for the following reasons: "1st. The distance across the river is only about fourteen hundred feet, a less distance by far than at any other part. 2d. The peculiar bend or turn of the river, forming almost a re-entering angle. 3d. The high banks on both sides of the river, favourable for the construction of formidable batteries.

4th. The demonstrated practicability of fixing across the river a chain or chains, at a spot where vessels, in turning the point, invariably lose their rapidity, and of course their force, by which a chain at any other part of the river would be liable to be broken." These considerations, together with the difficulty of taking West Point by siege, its being within a single night's sail of New York or Sandy Hook, and its importance in preserving the communications between the Eastern and Middle States, induced General Hamilton to recommend its purchase by the United States, as a permanent military post, especially for purposes of defence.^a This purchase, as we have already stated, was made soon after.

The fortifications at West Point were afterwards materially improved and repaired as late as 1794, under the general superintendence of Colonel Vincent, and the immediate direction of Major Niven, both French engineers; the latter assisted by Captain Fleming. Major Niven reported, December 12, 1794, that the old wall of Fort Putnam, facing Fort Clinton, had been taken down

^a Am. State Papers, Claims. p. 19, 20.

and rebuilt, enclosing the point, for the advantage of enlarging the battery facing the ridge where Forts Webb and Willis stood; also, that nine bomb-proof arches were closed over the barracks and magazines, and he had hoped to finish four more, but was unable.^a Liancourt, in his "*Voyage dans les Etats Unis*," observed, in 1796, on visiting Fort Putnam, that thirty-five thousand dollars had been uselessly expended, because forty-five thousand more were refused by Congress to complete the work; and that the walls, half done, and the casemates only commenced, remained exposed to the effects of the wintry weather.

It may be interesting here to give a brief description of the works at West Point, as they existed at this period; and in this unfinished state they have ever since remained. Fort Putnam was an irregular work, occupying the summit of Mount Independence, and immediately overlooking the plain, with which it communicated by a road winding up the hill. It also commanded the view for a great distance up the river, and down the same as

^a Am. State Papers, Mil. Affairs, i. 104.

far as Forts Montgomery and Clinton. The entrance was on the east side, which was lower than the west, in order to defilade it against the higher hills in the rear. The west side was a lofty precipice, on which and on the north and east sides, the wall was of moderate height; but on the southeast and south sides the scarp was very high, and in rear of it were several casemates, or vaulted rooms, constructed we believe in 1794, over which the terrepleine was extended, resting on arches bomb proof. It was supplied with water by an unfailing spring within the work, and from its peculiar position was deemed almost impregnable. The northeast corner of Fort Putnam is four hundred and ninety-five feet above the level of the river. Of the three smaller forts on small eminences between this and the river, that nearest to Fort Putnam was called Fort Webb; the next, Fort Willis; and that nearest to the river was called Fort Meigs.

Fort Clinton, situated at the northeastern angle of the plain, presented regular fortified fronts, with earthen ramparts, on the south and west; but the northern and eastern fronts

were irregular, and adapted to the brow of the slopes where the water batteries were placed, which this fort was designed to protect. These fronts of course had no ditch, but a scarp wall of stone on the east, and on the north, as far as the citadel or redoubt extended, which occupied the northeast corner, and was separated by an interior ditch from the other part of the work. Both the fort and the water batteries were favourably situated for opposing the passage of the enemy's vessels.

Fort Constitution, opposite to West Point, merits no particular description; but the chain between it and West Point was thus described by Dr. Thacher, in his interesting *Military Journal*, under date of September 26th, 1780. "As additional security, an iron chain of immense strength is thrown across at the short bend of the river, and fixed to huge blocks on each shore, and under the fire of batteries on both sides of the river. The links of this chain [several of which, we may add, still remain at the Military Academy,] are about twelve inches wide, and eighteen long, the bars about two inches square. It is

buoyed up by very large logs, of about sixteen feet long, pointed at the ends, to lessen their opposition to the force of the current at flood and ebb tide. The logs are placed at short distances from each other, the chain carried over them, and made fast to each by staples. There are also a number of anchors dropped at proper distances, with cables made fast to the chain, to give it greater stability." He adds: "Such is the formidable state and strength of this post, that it has received the appellation of the Gibraltar of America, and, when properly guarded, may bid defiance to an army of twenty thousand men."^a

We come now to the history of the Military Academy. The first suggestion of this Institution, we believe is due to Colonel Pickering, as early as the 22d of April, 1783. A committee of Congress having been appointed to propose a peace establishment for the United States, Colonel Hamilton, its chairman, wrote to Washington, asking his sentiments on this subject; and Washington communicated a similar request to the principal officers then in camp. From the reply of Colonel Picker-

^a Thacher, p. 258.

ing, then quarter-master general to the army, we make the following extract: "If any thing like a military academy in America be practicable at this time, it must be grounded on the permanent military establishment for our frontier posts and arsenals, and the wants of the states, separately, of officers to command the defences on their sea coasts. On this principle it might be expedient to establish a military school or academy at West Point. And that a competent number of young gentlemen might be induced to become students, it might be made a rule, that vacancies in the standing regiment should be supplied from thence; those few instances excepted where it would be just to promote a meritorious sergeant. For this end, the number which shall be judged requisite to supply vacancies in the standing regiment might be fixed, and that of the students, who are admitted with an expectation of filling them, fixed accordingly. They might be allowed subsistence at the public expense. If any other youth desired to pursue the same studies at the military academy, they might be admitted; only subsisting themselves.

Those students should be instructed in what is usually called military discipline, tactics, and the theory and practice of fortification and gunnery. The commandant and one or two other officers of the standing regiment, and the engineers, making West Point their general residence, would be masters of the academy; and the inspector-general superintend the whole.”^a

The importance of thorough military instruction, had been deeply felt by Washington and his coadjutors in the war of the Revolution; not only in providing efficient commanders and engineers, but in disciplining the great body of the troops, and in preparing the militia for effective action, when called into service. Prompted by this experience, General Knox, the Secretary of War, after the establishment of the federal government, digested a plan for the organization and instruction of the militia, which he submitted to the President, January 18, 1790; and which Washington laid before Congress, for their information, on the 21st of the same

^a Sparks, viii. 417.

month. He proposed that the militia from forty-six to sixty years of age, should form a *reserved corps*; those from twenty-one to forty-five the *main corps*; and those from eighteen to twenty, inclusive, the *advanced corps*; which latter should be assembled from ten to thirty days annually, to receive military instruction, being clothed and subsisted during that time by the government. He remarked that "All discussions, on the subject of a powerful militia, will result in one or other of the following principles: 1. Either efficient institutions must be established for the military education of youth, and the knowledge acquired therein be diffused throughout the country by means of rotation; or, 2. The militia must be formed of substitutes, after the manner of Great Britain. If the United States possess the vigour of mind," he added, "to establish the first institution, it may be reasonably expected to produce the most unequivocal advantages. A glorious national spirit will be introduced, with its extensive train of political consequences. But the second principle, a militia of substitutes," he afterwards observed, "is pregnant in a

degree, with the mischiefs of a standing army ;” alluding to the generally inferior and selfish character of mercenary soldiers.^a On this scheme, which has often been quoted, we would merely remark, that the officers required to instruct the advanced corps, above proposed, would have constituted a military academy on the grandest scale, had the plan been adopted. And a plan something like this we believe to be the only one, which could fit the great body of our militia for immediate efficient service ; if indeed this were deemed necessary.

An act of Congress was passed May 8, 1792, “ more effectually to provide for the national defence, by establishing a uniform militia throughout the United States ;” but no provision was made therein for military instruction. Washington, therefore, in his annual message of December 3d, 1793, suggested the inquiry whether this act had fully accomplished the desired objects, and whether a material feature in the improvement of the scheme of military defence “ ought not to be, to afford an opportunity for the study of those

^a Am. State Papers, Mil. Affairs, i, 6, 8,

branches of the art, which can scarcely ever be attained by practice alone." On this point no action was had, that season; but on the 7th (or 9th) of May, 1794, Congress passed an act "which provided for a corps of artillerists and engineers, to consist of four battalions, to each of which eight cadets were to be attached; and made it the duty of the Secretary of War to procure, at the public expense, the necessary books, instruments, and apparatus, for the use and benefit of said corps."^a This we believe was the first introduction of *Cadets* as a grade of officers in our service. The term is derived from the French, signifying a junior, and was previously applied in England to those young gentlemen who were trained for public employment, particularly for the service of the East India Company. In our army, it has always denoted a grade between that of lieutenant or ensign and sergeant; and has, we believe, been confined to the students connected with the Military Academy, at least since its first establishment.

^a Colonel Johnson's Report, p. 3.

In his last annual message of December 7th, 1796, President Washington again introduced the subject of military instruction, in the following explicit terms. "The institution of a military academy is also recommended by cogent reasons. However pacific the general policy of a nation may be, it ought never to be without an adequate stock of military knowledge for emergencies. The first, would impair the energy of its character; and both, would hazard its safety, or expose it to greater evils, when war could not be avoided. Besides, that war might not often depend upon its own choice. In proportion as the observance of pacific maxims might exempt a nation from the necessity of practising the rules of the military art, ought to be its care in preserving and transmitting, by proper establishments, the knowledge of that art. Whatever argument may be drawn from particular examples, superficially viewed, a thorough examination of the subject will evince that the art of war is both comprehensive and complicated; that it demands much previous study; and that the possession of it in its most improved and perfect state

is always of great moment to the security of a nation. This, therefore, ought to be a serious care of every government; and for this purpose, an academy, where a regular course of instruction is given, is an obvious expedient which different nations have successfully employed.”^a The same was repeated, in substance, in Washington’s Address to the Senate, of December 12th, 1796, but without any immediate result.

By an act dated April 27th, 1798, Congress authorized the raising of an additional regiment of artillerists and engineers, thus nominally increasing the number of cadets to fifty-six; but still without providing any instructors. In reference to this act, the Secretary of War, Mr. McHenry, thus wrote to the Chairman of the Committee of Defence, under date of June 28th, same year. “The Secretary, without designing to derogate from the merits of the officers appointed to the corps established by the acts cited, feels it his duty to suggest that other, and supplementary means of instruction, to the books

^a Foreign Relations, iii. 31, 2.

and instruments to be provided, appear to be absolutely indispensable, to enable them to acquire a due degree of knowledge, in the objects of their corps. The knowledge of certain arts and sciences, is absolutely necessary to the artillerist and engineer; such are arithmetic, geometry, mechanics, hydraulics, and designing. It is therefore submitted, whether provision ought not to be made for the employment of three or four teachers of the enumerated sciences, to be attached generally to the two corps of artillerists and engineers, and obligated to give instructions and lessons, at such times and places, and under such regulations, as the President may direct.”^a Accordingly, on the 16th of July, 1798; an act was passed, to augment the army, and for other purposes, by which the President was authorized to appoint four teachers of the arts and sciences necessary for the instruction of the artillerists and engineers. We are not informed however that any such teachers were appointed, prior to the year 1801;

^a Military Affairs, i. 129.

probably because the few cadets then appointed, were dispersed with their respective regiments.

The subject of military instruction was again brought forward by Mr. McHenry, the Secretary of War, in a memoir dated January 5, 1800, and laid before Congress by President Adams on the 14th of the same month, as containing matters in which the honour and safety of the nation were deeply interested. In connexion with the reorganizing of the army, he proposed the establishment of a military academy, to consist of four schools; one to be called "The Fundamental School;" another, "The School of Engineers and Artillerists;" another, "The School of Cavalry and Infantry;" and a fourth, "The School of the Navy;" each to be provided with the proper officers, professors, and teachers, with suitable buildings and apparatus. Mr. McHenry then adds, "The cadets of the army, and a certain number of young persons, destined for military and naval service, ought to study at least two years in the Fundamental School; and if destined for the corps of engineers or artillerists, or for the navy, two

years more in the appropriate school ; if for the cavalry or infantry, one year more in the appropriate school. But persons who, by previous instruction elsewhere, may have become acquainted with some or all the branches taught in the Fundamental School, may, after due examination by the directors and professors of that school, be either received then for a shorter time, or pass immediately to one or other of the schools of practice, according to the nature and extent of their acquirements and intended destination.”^a

In a supplementary report, dated January 31st, but transmitted to the House of Representatives, February 13th, of the same year, Mr. McHenry gave an estimate of the expense of the whole establishment ; urging its importance, and the need which the country had of skilful engineers, by a long and cogent argument. The whole report, he observed, “ contemplates certain military schools as an essential mean, in conjunction with a small military establishment, to prepare for, and perpetuate to the United States, at a very

^a Mil. Affairs, i. 133.

moderate expense, a body of scientific officers and engineers, adequate to any future exigency, qualified to discipline for the field, in the shortest time, the most extended armies, and to give the most decisive and useful effects to their operations.”^a A bill in accordance with the above plan was introduced into the House of Representatives, March 19th, 1800, but postponed on the 28th of April, of the same year. The subject was renewed, however, in the following year, when, December 30th, 1801, the House of Representatives passed a resolution in favour of reducing the military establishment of the United States.^b

On the 11th of January, 1802, the bill was reported, and, March 16th, in the same year, the act was passed, “fixing the military establishment of the United States,” and establishing the *Military Academy*. By this act the artillerists and engineers were made to constitute two distinct corps; forty cadets being attached to the former, and ten to the latter. The corps of engineers was made to consist of

^a Mil. Affairs, i. 142.

^b Smith’s Report, p. 6.

one engineer with the pay, rank, and emoluments of a major; two assistant engineers with the rank of captains; two others, first lieutenants; and two others, second lieutenants; besides the ten cadets above mentioned, with the pay of sixteen dollars per month, and two rations per day. The 27th section provided that "The said corps, when so organized, shall be established at West Point, in the State of New York, and shall constitute a Military Academy; and the engineers, assistant engineers, and cadets, shall be subject, at all times, to do duty in such places, and on such service, as the President of the United States shall direct."^a It also provided that the senior engineer officer present should be the superintendent of the Academy; and authorized the Secretary of War to procure, at the public expense, the necessary books, implements, and apparatus, for the use and benefit of the institution. In the following year, another act, dated 28th of February, 1803, empowered the President to appoint one teacher of the French language, and one teacher of drawing.

^a Johnson's Report, p. 5.

The early state and progress of the Academy were thus described by Colonel Jonathan Williams, then chief engineer, in a report requested by the President, and dated March 14, 1808. "This institution was established at West Point, in the year 1801, under the direction of a private citizen, and was nothing more than a mathematical school for the few cadets that were then in service. It was soon found that the government of young military men was incompatible with the ordinary system of schools, and consequently, this institution ran into disorder, and the teacher into contempt. When the peace establishment was made, . . . it was not probably foreseen, that, although the head-quarters of the corps might be at West Point, yet the duties of the individual officers necessarily spread them along our coast, from one extremity of the United States to the other; and as the whole number of officers can be no more than sixteen, they could not, in their dispersed state, constitute a military academy. . . . A part only of the officers were appointed soon after the passage of the act,

of whom the major, who was ex-officio the chief engineer, and two captains, took charge of the academy, the students of which were the cadets belonging to the regiment of artillery. The major occasionally read lectures on fortifications, gave practical lessons in the field, and taught the use of instruments generally. The two captains taught mathematics; the one in the line of geometrical, the other in that of algebraical demonstrations.

“As the corps was small, as it had little or nothing to do in its more appropriate professional duties, and as the students were few, the institution went on producing all the effect in its power, and all that could be expected, on its limited scale. It was soon discovered that mere mathematics would not make either an artillerist or an engineer; and a power was given by law to appoint a teacher of drawing and of the French language. Had this law, instead of absolutely limiting the number of teachers, and designating their duties, left it general in the discretion of the President, to appoint such and so many as he might find requisite to produce the effect contemplated by the establishment, and left

the internal organization to him who, from constant observation, could judge of the most expedient one, with a reasonable but ample appropriation, we should, at this day, have a greater number of well-instructed young officers than we can boast of. From that time to this, however, the Academy has progressed beyond what could have been expected from its means; but now the first mathematical teacher has resigned, and the second has for several years been employed as Surveyor-General of the United States in the western country.

“During the last year, a citizen, of eminent talents as a mathematician, has been employed as principal teacher, and a first lieutenant of engineers performed the duties of assistant teacher, while the professor of French and drawing confined his abilities to these branches. So far as talents can go, nothing is wanting as to these teachers; they are all capable in the highest degree: the subscriber is only apprehensive that he shall not be able to retain them. Mr. Hassler, the chief mathematician, is already designated for a survey of the coast, when circumstances shall permit

that business to be undertaken, and it could not be committed to more able hands. Mr. Mason [De Masson], the professor of French and drawing, is a man of too great and too extensive abilities to be kept in a situation so much below his merit; this gentleman, being perfect master of the French and English languages, fully acquainted with all that has been written on the art of fortification, and eminently distinguished in science and general erudition, ought, in the opinion of the subscriber, to be placed at the head of what the French call *Le Genie*, which cannot be literally translated in its extensive sense. It signifies the art of an engineer, generally, in all its branches. Mr. Mason [De Masson] being the only teacher designated by the law, he is the only one that, exclusive of the corps of engineers, can be said to belong to the institution. In short, the military academy, as it now stands, is like a foundling, barely existing among the mountains, and nurtured at a distance out of sight and almost unknown to its legitimate parents.”^a

^a Military Affairs, i. 229.

Colonel Williams concluded his report by recommending the creation of an academical staff, consisting of the chief engineer, as superintendent ex-officio, with the power of appointing one of the officers or professors to do the duties of superintendent in his absence; also a professor of natural and experimental philosophy; a professor of mathematics; and a professor of engineering, to have a drawing teacher, and a French teacher, and a German teacher under him; in addition to which he suggested the employment of professors of architecture, and, during a portion of each year, of chemistry and mineralogy, as also of riding, fencing, and sword masters, to attend periodically at the academy.

We may here add, that Colonel Williams being senior officer of the corps of engineers, was ex-officio superintendent of the Military Academy, from its first establishment, until his resignation from the service, July 31st, 1812. Colonel Williams was consul of the United States in France, during the war of the Revolution; was appointed to the corps of artillerists and engineers about 1799, and

served in the Western States, until he received the above appointment. He afterwards rose to the rank of Brevet Brigadier General, and after resigning from the service, resided in Philadelphia until his decease, in 1815. The teachers at the Academy during his superintendence, were, of mathematics, *George Barron*, appointed January 6th, 1801, and dismissed by the President, February 11th, 1802; *Francis R. Hassler*, appointed February 14th, 1807, who resigned February 14th, 1810, to superintend the coast survey; and Captain *Alden Partridge*, appointed an assistant in this department, November 4th, 1806. The teacher of French and drawing was *Francis De Masson*, who was appointed July 12th, 1803, and resigned March 31st, 1812. He was afterwards a teacher in the Military College of Sandhurst, England. We should add that Christian E. Zœller acted as teacher of drawing from September 1st, 1808, to April 30th, 1810, when Mr. De Masson again supplied his place, until July 1812.^a It is stated, we believe on good authority, that

^a Military Affairs, ii. 387.

Captain *William A. Barron* of the corps of engineers acted as teacher of mathematics; and Captain *Jared Mansfield* of the same corps, as teacher of natural philosophy, commencing with the year 1802; the former being succeeded by Mr. Hassler, in 1807, and the latter, though absent some years in the West, as Surveyor-General, returning afterwards to the Academy, as we shall again have occasion to mention. The students at the Academy, in 1802, were Lieutenants James Wilson and Alexander Macomb (the latter now major-general), and Cadets Joseph G. Swift and Simon M. Levi.^a

Such was the state of this institution, when the following special message was submitted to Congress, by President Jefferson, on the 18th of March, 1808. "The scale on which the Military Academy at West Point was originally established, is become too limited to furnish the number of well instructed subjects, in the different branches of artillery and engineering, which the public service calls for. The want of such characters is

^a Military Affairs, ii. 634.

already sensibly felt, and will be increased with the enlargement of our plans of military preparation. The chief engineer having been instructed to consider the subject, and to propose an augmentation which might render the establishment commensurate with the present circumstances of our country, has made the report which I now transmit for the consideration of Congress. The idea suggested by him of removing the institution to this place, is also worthy of attention. Besides the advantage of placing it under the immediate eye of the government, it may render its benefits common to the Naval Department, and will furnish opportunities of selecting, on better information, the characters most qualified to fulfil the duties which the public service may call for.”^a This message seems to have produced no immediate result; for although an act was passed, approved April 12th, 1808, which has been quoted in reference to this subject, and although it provided for the appointment of 156 additional cadets, among the officers of the new troops

^a Military Affairs, i. 228.

which it authorized to be raised, yet it did not attach them to the Military Academy, nor make any provision for their instruction. Accordingly, the whole number of cadets appointed in the four years prior to 1812, we believe was only fifty-two. "To send them to their regiments without instruction was deemed useless; and to order them to West Point could not have been done with propriety, without making suitable provision for the reception and instruction of so great a number."^a The proposition for removing this institution to Washington, was then, as it has ever since been, discarded or rejected.

The revision of the preceding laws was recommended by Mr. Madison, in his annual message, dated December 5, 1810, "with a view to a more enlarged cultivation and diffusion of the advantages of such institutions, by providing professorships for all the necessary branches of military instruction, and by the establishment of an additional academy, at the seat of government or elsewhere. The means," he added, "by which wars, as well

^a Military Affairs, ii. 381.

for defence as offence, are now carried on, render these schools of the more scientific operations an indispensable part of every adequate system. . . . In a country, happily without the other opportunities, seminaries where the elementary principles of the art of war can be taught without actual war, and without the expense of extensive and standing armies, have the precious advantage of uniting an essential preparation against external dangers, with a scrupulous regard to internal safety. In no other way, probably, can a provision of equal efficacy for the public defence be made at so little expense, or more consistently with the public liberty." In the following year, the President again reminded Congress "of the importance of these military seminaries, which, in every event, will form a valuable and frugal part of our military establishment."^a

Accordingly, on the 29th of April, 1812, an act was passed, "making further provision for the corps of engineers;" the second section of which provided that the Military

^a Johnson's Report, p. 7.

Academy should consist of the corps of engineers and the following professors, "in addition to the teachers of the French language and drawing already provided," viz. one professor of natural and experimental philosophy; one professor of mathematics; and one professor of the art of engineering; each of them to have an assistant professor, taken from the most prominent characters of the officers or cadets. By the third section of the same law it was enacted: "That the cadets heretofore appointed in the service of the United States, whether of artillery, cavalry, riflemen, or infantry, or that may in future be appointed, as hereinafter provided, shall at no time exceed two hundred and fifty; that they may be attached, at the discretion of the President of the United States, as students, to the Military Academy, and be subject to the established regulations thereof; that they shall be arranged into companies of non-commissioned officers and privates, according to the directions of the commandant of engineers, and be officered from the said corps, for the purposes of military instruction; that there shall be added to each company of cadets four mu-

sicians; and the said corps shall be trained and taught all the duties of a private, non-commissioned officer, and officer, be encamped at least three months of each year, and taught all the duties incident to a regular camp; that the candidates for cadets be not under the age of fourteen, nor above the age of twenty-one years; that each cadet, previously to his appointment by the President of the United States, shall be well versed in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and that he shall sign articles, with the consent of his parent or guardian, by which he shall engage to serve five years, unless sooner discharged: and all such cadets shall be entitled to, and receive, the pay and emoluments now allowed by law to cadets in the corps of engineers."

The fourth section of the same law provided, "That when any cadet shall receive a regular degree from the academical staff, after going through all the classes, he shall be considered among the candidates for a commission in any corps, according to the duties he may be judged competent to perform; and in case there shall not, at the time, be a vacancy in such corps, he may be at-

tached to it, at the discretion of the President of the United States, by brevet of the lowest grade, as a supernumerary officer, with the usual pay and emoluments of such grade, until a vacancy shall happen: Provided, That there shall not be more than one supernumerary officer to any one company, at the same time."

The fifth section appropriated the sum of \$25,000 towards the buildings, apparatus, library, implements, and contingent expenses of such an institution; and thus laid the broad basis of the present United States Military Academy.

Under the provisions of this act, the number of cadets was progressively enlarged to its present complement; and on the resignation of General Williams, July 31st, 1812, the superintendence of the Academy devolved on Colonel *Joseph G. Swift*, (appointed Brevet Brigadier General in 1814,) as senior officer of the corps of engineers. The act of March 3d, 1815, by which the army was reduced to ten thousand men, made no reduction in the Military Academy; but on the other hand, Mr. Madison, in his last message, dated De-

cember 5th, 1815, recommended its enlargement, and the establishment of others in other sections of the Union. Accordingly, during the sessions of Congress in 1815 and 1817, bills were introduced, in the House of Representatives, for creating additional military academies; but they were not definitively acted upon.

It is stated in the Register of the Military Academy, that General Swift was relieved January 3d, 1815; joined again November 25th, 1816; and was finally relieved as superintendent, January 13th, 1817; and that *Captain Alden Partridge*, of the corps of engineers, was superintendent from January 3d, 1815, to November 25th, 1816, and from January 13th to July 28th, 1817. As there appears to have been a difference of opinion concerning the office of superintendent during this period, we offer here the following extracts, by way of explanation. The first is from Military Academy orders, of March 24th, 1814, signed by General Swift; as follows. "The Academical regulations of the 25th May, 1810, are hereby confirmed, and will continue to be enforced. Captain Alden

Partridge, Professor of Engineering, has the internal direction and control of the Academy, and direction of the steward's department. The academic duties of the cadets, in every particular, and of the various Professors, Instructors, and Academic Officers, are under his control; [and] no other officer of the Engineers than Captain Partridge, will interfere with the Academy. The Rev. Mr. Empie, on his arrival, will commence the duties of chaplain; [and] until a Professor of History and Geography be appointed, Mr. Empie will discharge the duties of that station. Captain Samuel Perkins, as Deputy Quarter-Master General, takes post at West Point, and will discharge the duties of Quarter-Master to the Post and Academy. Mr. Isaac Partridge is appointed to discharge the duties of Steward, and will immediately commence the Cadets' Commons."

The next extract is partly from Regulations for the Military Academy, dated January 3d, 1815, and partly from an Order of the War Department, dated February 28th, 1815; both approved and signed by James Monroe, then Secretary of War, and the two being sub-

stantially the same. The former provided that “A *permanent Superintendent* shall be appointed to the Military Academy, who, under the direction of the Secretary of War, shall have exclusive control of that institution, and of those connected with it, and will be held responsible for the conduct and progress of it;” and the latter added, he “will direct the studies, field exercise, and all other academic duties.” The former provided that the commandant of the corps of engineers should be the *Inspector* of the Academy, and should visit it officially, and report thereon to the Department of War, proposing such alterations and improvements as he and the Superintendent might deem necessary. The latter added that the Inspector “is responsible to the Department of War for the correct progress of the institution. From the Inspector only, the Superintendent of the Academy will receive orders, and to him only will the Superintendent make all returns and communications pertaining to the institution. No officer of the army, of any rank whatever, shall exercise command at West Point, unless subordinate to the Inspector or Superintendent of

the Academy." Both the Regulations and the Order farther provided for the supply of ordnance stores from the ordnance department near Albany, the supply of books and stationary by the quarter-master at West Point, the appointment of a suitable person to act as treasurer for the cadets, and the promotion of graduates to such corps of the army as their diploma might authorize or recommend.

A separate series of "Rules with respect to the Promotion of Cadets of the United States Military Academy" was approved by Mr. Monroe, probably at about the same time; providing that their distribution to the different corps, and their rank in the same, should depend on their general merit, as ascertained by a competent board of examiners; and that no cadet should be promoted until after having completed his course of studies and received his diploma; nor in case of failure to do this, should he on any account receive an appointment in the army, until after the promotion of the class to which he belonged; and, finally, that no cadet who should be dismissed, or compelled to resign,

on account of idleness, neglect of duty, or any species of bad conduct, should be eligible to any office or post in the army, until at least five years after the promotion of the class to which he belonged.^a

The remaining extract is the following, from a letter addressed to General Swift, dated Department of War, July 1st, 1816, and signed by William H. Crawford, then Secretary of War. "I have the honour to return the regulations defining a complete course of education, drawn up by the Academical Staff, and transmitted by you to this Department, which has been approved, with such modifications as have been judged necessary by the President. The regulation requiring the unmarried professors, teachers, and assistants, to eat with the cadets, is believed to be conformable to the general usage of colleges, and ought not to be considered onerous. I understand also that Captain Partridge is himself a bachelor, and of course subject to the regulation. From his signing some of his acts as superintendent of the

^a Mil. Affairs, i. 839.

academy, he may have supposed that he was not embraced by the rule. This, however, is a mistake. No officer, as long as the law remains as it is, can be the superintendent of the institution but the principal officer of the corps of engineers, or the next in command, of that corps, in case of his absence. If, however, in your opinion, the proposition made by the Academical Staff to attend the mess houses, and make daily reports of the fare, will protect the cadets from imposition, you are authorized to suspend the rule until further orders.”* A reference to the law of 1802, will show, we think, that Captain Partridge being the senior engineer officer present at the Academy, was legally its Superintendent at the time of Mr. Crawford’s communication.

The professors appointed to the Military Academy, from 1812 to 1817 inclusive, were the following. Captain *Alden Partridge* of the corps of engineers, was appointed professor of mathematics, April 13th, 1813; and so continued till appointed professor of engi-

* Military Affairs, i. 838.

neering, September 1st, 1813, which appointment he resigned, December 31st, 1816, on assuming the duties of Superintendent. Captain Partridge graduated at the Academy in 1806, and remained there as assistant professor, till 1813, as already mentioned. He resigned his commission in 1818; and has since been superintendent of a private military academy, at Norwich, Vermont, and at Middletown, Connecticut. *Andrew Ellicott* was appointed professor of mathematics, September 1st, 1813, and so continued till his decease, August 29, 1820. Lieutenant John Wright was appointed assistant professor of mathematics, April 1st, 1814; and Lieutenant Charles Davies succeeded him, December 1st, 1816. Lieutenant-Colonel *Jared Mansfield*, of the corps of engineers, was appointed professor of natural and experimental philosophy, October 7th, 1812, and so continued till his resignation, August 31st, 1828. The *Essays on Mathematics* published by Colonel Mansfield, attracted the notice of President Jefferson, who conferred on him, unsolicited, the appointment of captain of engineers, and ordered him to West Point as an instructor,

in 1802. In 1803, he was appointed Surveyor-General of the Northwestern Territory, and there applied for the first time the system of rectangular co-ordinates in the surveying and laying out of land. He filled this place until 1812; and after his resignation in 1828, he resided in Cincinnati until his death about two years thereafter. He was much beloved; and his portrait, painted at the request and expense of the class which graduated in 1829, is still preserved with much interest at the Academy. Captain David B. Douglass, of the corps of engineers, was appointed his assistant, January 1st, 1815, and so continued till 1821.

Claude Crozet was appointed assistant professor of engineering, October 1st, 1816; and succeeded Captain Partridge as professor of that branch, January 1st, 1817; but he resigned this station, April 28th, 1823, and has since been chief engineer of the State of Virginia. To him the Academy, and we believe our country, was indebted for the introduction of the black board, as a means of instruction; for the introduction of the important science of descriptive geometry, and its

various applications, including the topographical representation of ground by means of horizontal curves, or by pen or colours; also for the introduction of the French analytical mathematics; and for a thorough course in the art of war and fortification. He first instructed a few cadets who had sufficient knowledge of French, and they became the instructors of others. *Claudius Berard* succeeded Mr. De Masson, as teacher of French; January 3d, 1815; and we are happy to say, has continued in that station till the present time. *Christian E. Zæller* who had before acted as teacher of drawing, was reappointed, July 1st, 1812, and so continued till his resignation, January 5th, 1819. *Pierre Thomas* was appointed sword-master, March 1st, 1814, and resigned December 12th, 1825.

Rev. *Adam Empie* was assigned to duty as chaplain at West Point, and acting professor of Ethics, &c., from August 9th, 1813, to April 30th, 1817; before this office was made a permanent part of the Academy. General *Joseph G. Swift*, who has been already mentioned as Superintendent of the Academy during a part of this period, was

one of its first two graduates, in 1802; became captain in 1806, aide-de-camp to Major-General Pinckney in 1812, colonel in the same year, and brevet brigadier general in 1814. He resigned his commission in 1818, and has since been employed by the United States in superintending the national improvements on Lake Ontario.

A series of *Rules and Regulations* for the Government of the United States Military Academy, was drawn up and approved by Mr. Crawford, we believe on the 6th of March, 1816. Besides embodying most of the preceding regulations, it provided for the appointment of a Board of Visitors, to consist of five suitable gentlemen, who should attend each general examination, and report thereon, through the Inspector, to the Secretary of War. Of this Board, the Superintendent was constituted the President. It also provided that the General Examinations should take place twice in each year, commencing on the 15th of July and the 15th of December; and that there should be an annual vacation, to commence immediately after the examination in July, and end on the

last day of August. New cadets were required to join the Academy between the first of September and October, and to be examined in spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic. It was farther directed that "A course of studies, embracing definitively all the branches of science and instruction to be pursued at the Military Academy, and also all rules for the classification of the cadets, shall be compiled by the Superintendent and Academic Staff; which, when approved by the Secretary of War, shall be considered as comprising a complete course of education at the Institution."

Accordingly, a *course of studies*, and rules connected therewith, was drawn up, at the Academy, on the 22d of May, 1816; and approved, as we have already seen, by Mr. Crawford, on the 1st of July, in the same year. The substance of this document is contained in the following extract. "The course of the *first year* shall embrace English grammar and composition, and the French language; logarithms, algebra, and plane geometry, to include ratios and proportions. The course of the *second year* shall embrace a continuation of the French

language; the geometry of planes and solids, and the construction of geometrical problems; the application of algebra to geometry, and the mensuration of planes and solids; plane and spherical trigonometry, with their applications; conic sections, practical geometry, and drawing. A course for the *third year*, shall embrace natural and experimental philosophy, astronomy, engineering, and drawing continued. A course for the *fourth year*, shall embrace geography, history, and ethics, the review of the English grammar, and of the Latin and Greek languages; also a general review of the most important branches in each of the departments." Fluxions were to be taught and studied at the option of the professor and student; the elements of chemistry were included under philosophy; and those of natural and political law, under ethics. The Greek and Latin languages were to be reviewed only by those who had studied them previously to their entering the Academy. The military instruction was separately referred to, being then taught only practically in the field.^a A separate

^a Am. St. Papers, Mil. Affairs, i. 838.

General Order was issued June 29th, 1816, repeating and defining the qualifications for admission to the Academy, as prescribed by the act of 1812; and another General Order was issued, September 4th, 1816, prescribing the uniform, nearly the same as that now prescribed, excepting the common hat and cockade then required to be worn.

It becomes necessary here to present the following statement, made by General Maccomb, then Chief Engineer, in a Report to the Department of War, dated March 30th, 1822. "The Military Academy may be considered as having been in its infancy until about the close of 1817, or beginning of 1818, prior to which there was but little system or regularity. Cadets were admitted without examination, and without the least regard to their age or qualifications, as required by the law of 1812. Hence the institution was filled with students who were more or less unfit for their situations. It is not surprising, therefore, that a large portion of them have been under the necessity of leaving the Academy without completing their education."^a

^a Mil. Affairs, ii. 381.

The same statement had been made in substance, in a memoir drawn up by General Bernard and Colonel McRee, communicated to Congress, January 15th, 1819, by Mr. Calhoun, then Secretary of War ; its object being to recommend the establishment of one or more Schools of Application, or Practice, for the army. They say, " The Elementary School at West Point has hitherto been very inferior as such, and altogether inadequate to the objects for which it was established. A project has been presented, however, calculated to place this school upon the footing of the most perfect of the kind which exists. As to a School of Application, there is none. The degree of instruction given to the cadets, at the school of West Point, has heretofore been for the most part limited to a general acquaintance with those branches of knowledge which are common to all the arms of an army, and which ought to have been extended and applied to artillery, fortification, and topography. If any have been so fortunate as to render themselves serviceable, either in the artillery or engineers, the cause must be sought for in their own industry, and

not in the education received by them at West Point, which was barely sufficient to excite a desire for military inquiries, and of military pursuits.”^a That the Academy was nevertheless favourably regarded, is proved by the fact that Mr. Calhoun, in the same communication to Congress, January 15th, 1819, recommended not only a School of Application, in accordance with the above, but an additional military academy, for the southern and western states.

On the 17th of July, 1817, the orders were given relieving Captain Partridge as Superintendent of the Military Academy, and appointing Major (now Colonel) *Sylvanus Thayer* to succeed him. The change took place on the 28th of the same month; and from this period we date the commencement of the pre-eminent success and reputation which the Academy has since enjoyed. Colonel Thayer had visited and studied in the military schools of France, and profited by the opportunity of forming more complete views of the management of such an institution than

^a Mil. Affairs, i. 834.

were then generally entertained, even among military men. Under his energetic and judicious administration, strict discipline was enforced ; the regulations farther improved ; the course of studies and exercises extended, and thoroughly taught ; the library and apparatus increased by choice additions ; and every thing done which the means permitted, to render the institution worthy of its location and its name. Colonel Thayer held this responsible station till July 1, 1833 ; when he was relieved from it, and appointed to superintend the construction of the important fortifications, including the new Fort Warren, in the harbour of Boston, Massachusetts. We may here add, that Colonel Thayer, after graduating at the Academy in 1808, served with distinction in the war of 1812, and was breveted a major, for “ meritorious and distinguished services,” particularly in the defence of Norfolk, Virginia, against the British, in 1814. This was prior to his visit to France, already referred to.

Of the professors at West Point during Colonel Thayer’s superintendence, this seems the proper place to make mention. *Rev.*

Thomas Picton succeeded to the duties of chaplain and professor of ethics, &c., July 20, 1818, some time after Rev. Mr. Empie's resignation. Mr. Picton resigned this office January 1, 1825, and we believe has since resided in New York city. He was succeeded by *Rev. Charles P. McIlvaine*, who was appointed April 6, 1825, but resigned the office December 31, 1827, was afterwards settled in Brooklyn, N. Y., and is now Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Ohio. Under his ministry a considerable number of the cadets made profession of piety, several of whom have since resigned and entered the sacred office, one of them being now the Missionary Bishop of the Episcopal church in Arkansas. Mr. McIlvaine was succeeded, January 1, 1828, by *Rev. Thomas Warner*, a gentleman of extensive acquirements, who held the office until September 1st, 1838; and who has since established a private institution for general education in Paris.

On the resignation of Mr. Crozet, already mentioned, as professor of engineering, he was succeeded, April 29th, 1823, by *David B. Douglass*, who had previously been assistant

professor of philosophy, and professor of mathematics in the Academy. Major Douglass resigned this professorship, February 28, 1831, and has since been employed as engineer of the New York Water Works, as he was previously of the Morris Canal in New Jersey. *Lieutenant Dennis H. Mahan*, of the corps of engineers, succeeded him, as professor of engineering, March 1, 1831; having previously visited France, and studied some time in the Military School at Metz. He has published valuable text-books on both the civil and military branches of this department, at the head of which he still continues. The assistant professors of engineering during the period in question, were Lieutenant Constantine M. Eakin, from 1817 to 1820; Lieutenant Henry Brewerton, from 1820 to 1821; Lieutenant Jonathan Prescott, from 1821 to 1822; Lieutenant Edward H. Courtenay, from 1822 to 1824; Lieutenant Alfred Mordecai, from 1824 to 1825; Lieutenant Dennis H. Mahan, from 1825 to 1826; Lieutenant George S. Greene, from 1826 to 1827; Lieutenant William H. C. Bartlett, from 1827 to 1829; Lieutenant Charles Mason, from 1829

to 1831 ; Lieutenant James Allen, from 1831 to 1832 ; and Lieutenant Henry E. Prentiss, from 1832 to 1833.

The office of Instructor of Tactics was introduced at the Academy by Colonel Thayer, the duties of the Instructor being to "take the immediate command, under the Superintendent, of the corps of cadets," and "superintend their instruction, so far as relates to Infantry Tactics ;" he being also charged with the police of the institution. Lieutenant *G. W. Gardiner* was appointed Acting Instructor of Tactics, September 15, 1817, and succeeded by Captain *John Bliss*, of the infantry, who was appointed April 2, 1818, and relieved January 11, 1819. Captain *John R. Bell*, of the light artillery, succeeded him, February 8, 1819, and continued till March 17, 1820. He was succeeded by Captain (now Colonel) *William J. Worth*, of the artillery, who continued in this office from March 17, 1820, to January 1, 1829. Colonel Worth had served on the northern frontier, during the war of 1812, and acquired distinction which was still farther enhanced by the exact discipline and military spirit which he enforced

at the Academy. He was succeeded by Captain (now Major) *Ethan A. Hitchcock*, of the infantry, who held the office from January 1, 1829, to June 24, 1833. Major Hitchcock well sustained this station, and has since been offered the governorship of Liberia, but preferred remaining in the service. The assistant instructors of tactics, charged with the immediate supervision of the academic police, have been numerous, and we are compelled here to omit their names, though many of them merit an honourable record.

After the resignation of Colonel Mansfield, already mentioned, as professor of Natural and Experimental Philosophy, he was succeeded by Lieutenant *Edward H. Courtenay*, of the engineers, who filled this chair in an able manner, from September 1, 1828, to December 31, 1834. Professor Courtenay had been an assistant in this department from 1821 to 1822, and in engineering, as already mentioned, from 1822 to 1824. He has since filled the chair of Mathematics in the University of Pennsylvania, and is now in the civil service of the United States. The assistant professors of philosophy, during the

period now in question, were, besides Captain Douglass and Lieutenant Courtenay, Lieutenant Charles Davies, from 1821 to 1823; Lieutenant S. Stanhope Smith, from 1823 till his death, in 1828; Lieutenant Robert P. Parrott, from 1828 to 1829; and Lieutenant T. Jefferson Cram, from 1829 to 1836.

On the death of Professor Ellicott, he was succeeded in the department of Mathematics by Captain *David B. Douglass*, already mentioned, who held the office from August 30, 1820, to April 29, 1823; when he accepted the chair of Engineering. He was succeeded by Lieutenant *Charles Davies*, who had previously assisted in this department, and in that of Natural Philosophy. Professor Davies filled this chair from April 29, 1823, to May 31, 1837; during which period he published a valuable series of text-books on all the branches of mathematics. The assistants in this department during Colonel Thayer's superintendence, were Lieutenant Charles Davies, from 1816 to 1821; Lieutenant S. Stanhope Smith, from 1821 to 1823; Lieutenant Horace Webster from 1823 to 1825;

and Lieutenant Edward C. Ross, from 1825 to 1833.

The teachers of French, besides Mr. Berard, who continued at the head of this branch through the whole time in question, were *Joseph Du Commun*, from March 1, 1818, to August 31, 1831, when he resigned on account of ill health; and *Julian Molinard*, from September 1, 1831, to September 12, 1839. In the branch of Drawing, after Mr. Zœller's resignation, *Thomas Gimbrede* was appointed teacher, and held the office from January 5, 1819, till his death, December 25, 1832. He had previously practised the art of engraving, and produced some valuable prints; but was peculiarly successful as a teacher of the art of drawing; and alike esteemed for his benevolence and urbanity.

The branch of Chemistry not being made a professorship by law during this period, was taught at first by assistant surgeons of the army, and afterwards by officers of the army. The first teacher recorded on the catalogue, was *James Cutbush*, M. D., from September 1, 1820, till his death, December 16th, 1823. A work of his on Pyrotechny

was published after his decease. *James E. Percival*, M. D., was teacher of chemistry from March 2d to July 6th, 1824; and was succeeded by *John Torrey*, M. D., the distinguished botanist, who held this place from August 25th, 1824, till his resignation as a surgeon, August 31, 1828. His successor, Lieutenant *W. Fenn Hopkins*, held this station from September 1, 1828, till August 31, 1835. The instructors of artillery, for whose office we are indebted to Colonel Thayer, were Lieutenant *George W. Gardiner*, from September 15th, 1817, to February 29th, 1820; Captain *Fabius Whiting*, from August 15th, 1820, to August 7th, 1821; and Lieutenant *Zebina J. D. Kinsley*, from December 18th, 1823, to December 1st, 1835. The sword-masters, after Mr. Thomas, were Pierre Trainque, from December 13th, 1825, till his death, June 27th, 1826; Louis S. Simon, from 1826 to 1831; and Albert Jumel, from 1831 to 1837. The leaders of the band, or music masters, were Richard Willis, the celebrated performer on the Kent bugle, from June 16th, 1817, to his death, we believe in 1830, and Alexander Kyle, his successor.

We now proceed to speak of the changes in the regulations, studies, and organization of the Academy, which took place under the superintendence of Colonel Thayer. An act of Congress was passed, April 14th, 1818, providing for a permanent chaplain, at the Military Academy, who should be "professor of geography, history, and ethics." The introduction of instructors of tactics, artillery, and chemistry, has already been alluded to, in naming those instructors. On the 14th February, 1818, the following Order was received by the Superintendent, from the Secretary of War. "As publishing in the Army Register the names of cadets who are distinguished for attainments and meritorious conduct may inspire attention to study, and create emulous exertion, you will report to this Department, annually in November, for that object, the names of those who have most distinguished themselves in the examination, not exceeding five in each class, specifying the studies in which they may excel." On the 15th of April, 1818, by an Order of the Engineer Department, the Superintendent was authorized to detail not exceeding four cadets,

to discharge the duties of acting assistant professor of mathematics ; each cadet so detailed, to receive ten dollars per month as a compensation for the extra duty. The appointment was to be considered an honourable distinction.^a

On the 12th of May, 1818, an Order was given from the Engineer Department, that the pay and subsistence of all cadets who neglect to join the Military Academy at the expiration of their furloughs should be stopped, unless they assigned the most satisfactory reasons for their absence ; and that any cadet, absent without leave for more than two months, should be discharged from the service of the United States. On the 23d of July, 1818, the following important regulations were approved by the Secretary of War.

“ 1. There shall be two general examinations in each year ; the first to commence on the 1st of January, and the second on the 1st of June. 2. All newly-appointed cadets will be ordered to join the Military Academy for examination by the 25th of June in each year,

^a Mil. Affairs, ii. 26.

and no cadet shall be examined for admission after the first day of September following, unless he shall have been prevented from joining at the proper time by sickness or some other unavoidable cause, in which case he may be examined with the fourth class, at the general examination in January, and if then found qualified to proceed with that class, may be admitted accordingly.

3. Until a revision of the laws relating to the Military Academy, there shall be in lieu of the vacation authorized by the existing regulations, an annual encampment, to commence on the 1st of July, and end on the 31st of August. 4. The superintendent is authorized to grant furloughs to the cadets, at the request of their parents, during the period of their encampment, provided that not more than one fourth of the whole number be absent at any one time, and provided also that every cadet, previously to his receiving a diploma, shall have been present at not less than two entire encampments.

On the 25th of February, 1820, a communication was made to the House of Representatives by Mr. Calhoun, then Secretary of

War, accompanied by a report from Major Thayer, containing a series of propositions for the improvement of the Academy, with remarks thereon by General Bernard and Colonel McRee, of the corps of engineers. This Report was written and submitted by Major Thayer, in November, 1817; and the remarks, which are without date, appear to have been written early in 1819; as Mr. Calhoun's communication was in reply to a resolution dated the 26th of February, 1819, calling for information concerning the Academy. The Report urged the appointment of one additional assistant professor of natural and experimental philosophy, and four of mathematics; two additional teachers of French; a professor of chemistry and mineralogy; and recommended also a professor of languages and oratory, as distinct from the duties of the chaplain; and a teacher of military drawing; all of them to be included in the *Academic Staff*. It recommended that the principal professors and teachers should "constitute an Academic Board or Council, of which the Superintendent should always be president, and whose duty it should be to

fix and improve the system of studies and instruction ; to conduct and decide upon all examinations ; and to specify in detail the duties of the several instructors." It also recommended that the age of admission should be from sixteen to twenty years inclusive ; and that the most distinguished graduates, not exceeding two in each class, should be promoted to the corps of engineers. General Bernard and Colonel McRee, in their remarks thereon, recommended a professorship of artillery, but not of languages ; and that the professorship of fortification should also include descriptive geometry. They recommended that the Academic Board should have power to alter the regulations or studies only with the approbation of the Secretary of War ; and also that the Academy should be rendered entirely distinct from the corps of engineers, as having an equal relation to all the corps of the army ; in which view Mr. Calhoun concurred.^a

On the revision of the Army Regulations,

^a Military Affairs, ii. 75, 86.

by General Scott, as published in 1821, the system of Regulations for the Military Academy, previously matured, was introduced therein without change. These Regulations, being readily accessible, we may be excused from repeating here, on account of their length and minuteness.^a They embodied the different regulations of which we have already spoken, in a more systematic form ; and supplied those farther details which experience had shown to be desirable, for the benefit of the institution. The principal changes in the studies proposed therein, compared with the programme of 1816, were the omission of English grammar in the first year ; the introduction of descriptive geometry and fluxions or the calculus as an indispensable study of the second year ; the introduction of chemistry in the third year ; the postponement of engineering to the fourth year, and the entire omission of the Greek and Latin languages, with the introduction of the science of war, including artillery and infantry tactics, as a regular course of study. In these

^a See Army Regulations of 1821, Article 78.

Regulations, the relative importance of the different studies in forming the merit-roll of the cadets, was first definitively settled, by a scale of numbers, nearly the same as at the present time. The text-books used at the Academy in 1824 were, Gay de Vernon's *Science of War and Fortification*, as translated for the Military Academy by Major O'Connor, of the United States Army; Lallemand's *Artillery*, translated by James Renwick, also for the United States service; *Rules and Regulations for the Infantry*, as prescribed for the service; Sganzin's *Cours de Construction*; Gregory's *Mechanics*; Enfield's *Natural Philosophy*; Newton's *Principia*; Henry's *Chemistry*; Cleaveland's *Mineralogy*; Lacroix's *Traité du Calcul*; Biot's *Essai de Géométrie Analytique*; Crozet's *Perspective*, and his *Descriptive Geometry*; Farrar's *Trigonometry*; Legendre's *Geometry*; Lacroix's *Algebra*; Berard's *French Grammar*, and his *Lecteur François*; *Histoire de Gil Blas*; *Histoire de Charles XII.*, par Voltaire; Morse's *Geography*; Tytler's *History*; Paley's *Moral Philosophy*; and Vattel's *Law of Nations*.^a

^a *Military Affairs*, ii. 661.

The trial of cadets Ragland, Loring, Fairfax, Vining, and Holmes, for insubordination in acting as a committee of the cadets, to prefer charges against Captain Bliss, we can allude to only as eliciting, from high authorities, the decision that the cadets are amenable to martial law. These young gentlemen were arrested, November 27th, 1818; and after a court of inquiry had examined their case, they were brought, in May, 1819, before a general court-martial, of which Colonel Hindman was president, and which decided that it had no jurisdiction in the case, as they were not subject to military law. On this occasion, the Secretary of War consulted Mr. Wirt, then Attorney General of the United States; from whose official report on the subject, dated August 21st, 1819, the following extract is made: "It is suggested by Colonel Hindman, on behalf of the court-martial, that these cadets are merely students. . . . But if the suggestion is intended to place cadets on the footing of civil students, clothed with all their civil privileges and immunities, it is proper to remark, that those cadets occupy a very different ground; they are en-

listed soldiers ; they engage like soldiers, to serve five years, unless sooner discharged ; they receive the pay, rations, and emoluments of sergeants ; they are bound to perform military duty, in such places, and on such service, as the commander-in-chief of the army of the United States shall order ; and finally, by the act of the 3d of March, 1815, fixing the military peace establishment of the United States, the corps to which they are attached, and of which they form a part, is expressly recognised as a part of that military establishment.”^a This opinion was corroborated by that of the President, and of the Secretary of War. We may here add, that the cadets above mentioned resigned their commissions soon after ; and appear to have acted from erroneous views.

The act of 1821, which reduced the army to six thousand men, made no change in the corps of engineers, or in the Military Academy. On the 16th of February, 1821, a motion was made in the House of Representatives “to discontinue the pay and rations of the cadets,

^a Mil. Aff. ii. 30.

and discharge them from the Academy ;” in other words to abolish the institution ; but it was negatived by a majority of eighty-nine. It was subsequent to these proceedings that Mr. Monroe, in his annual message, in 1822, thus expressed his opinion of the Military Academy. “ Good order is preserved in it, and the youth are well instructed in every science connected with the great object of the institution. They are also well trained and disciplined in the practical parts of the profession. The Military Academy forms the basis, in regard to science, on which the military establishment rests. It furnishes annually, after due examination, and on the report of the Academic Staff, many well informed youths, to fill the vacancies which occur in the several corps of the army ; while others, who retire to private life, carry with them such attainments as, under the right reserved to the several states to appoint the officers and to train the militia, will enable them, by affording a wider field for selection, to promote the great object of the power vested in Congress, of providing for the organizing, arming, and disciplining

the militia.”^a We may here add, that similar encomiums have been pronounced on the Academy, by every succeeding President of the United States, down to the present time. The more recent efforts which have been made to abolish the institution, we shall notice in a subsequent place.

On the resignation of Colonel Thayer as Superintendent of the Military Academy, he was succeeded by Major (now Lieutenant-Colonel) *R. E. De Russy*, of the corps of engineers; who continued in this office from July 1st, 1833, to September 1st, 1838; when he was relieved from this station, and assigned to the charge of the works for the defence of the Delaware and Chesapeake Bays. He was succeeded by Major *Richard Delafield*, of the engineers; the present able Superintendent. Rev. Mr. Warner having resigned the station of chaplain and professor of ethics, &c., was succeeded, September 1st, 1838, by Rev. *Jasper Adams*, formerly President of Charleston College, South Carolina, and author of a treatise on Moral Philo-

^a Johnson's Report, 7, 8.

sophy. In the department of engineering, Professor *Mahan* was assisted by Lieutenant Frederic A. Smith, from 1833 to 1834; by Lieutenant Samuel C. Ridgely, from 1834 to 1839; and by Lieutenant J. M. Scarritt, from 1839 to the present date.

The successor to Captain Hitchcock, as instructor of tactics and commandant of cadets, was Major *John Fowle*, of the infantry; who held this station from July 6th, 1833, to March 31st, 1838, when he was succeeded by Captain *Charles F. Smith*, of the artillery, who still holds this station. In the department of natural and experimental philosophy, Professor Courtenay was succeeded, January 1st, 1835, by Lieutenant *William H. C. Bartlett*, of the corps of engineers; author of a valuable treatise on the science of Optics. His assistants, successors to Lieutenant Cram, have been Lieutenant Jacob Ammen, from 1836 to 1837; Lieutenant Benjamin Alvord, 1837 to 1839; and Lieutenant Joseph Roberts, from 1839 to the present date. In the department of mathematics, Professor Davies was succeeded, June 1st, 1837, by Lieutenant *Albert E. Church*, of the artillery, who had

previously been chief assistant in this department, from 1833 to 1837, as successor to Lieutenant Ross. The subsequent assistants have been, Lieutenant William W. S. Bliss, from 1837 to January, 1840 ; and Lieutenant A. E. Shiras, from January, 1840, to the present date.

Lieutenant *Jacob W. Bailey* was appointed Professor of Chemistry July 5th, 1838 ; and Lieutenant H. L. Kendrick has been his assistant from 1838 to the present time. Lieutenant Bradford R. Alden succeeded Mr. Molinard, as second teacher of French, assistant to Mr. Berard, from September 12th, 1839, to February 4th, 1840 ; since which time this station has been filled by Mr. H. R. Agnel. After the death of Mr. Gimbrede, *Charles R. Leslie*, R. A., was appointed teacher of drawing, March, 2d, 1833 ; but he resigned the station April 15th, 1834, and was succeeded, May 8th, 1834, by *Robert W. Weir*, the present accomplished teacher. Mr. Leslie and Mr. Weir are both recognised among the most distinguished American painters ; and the latter has been employed, by order of Congress, to execute one of the

paintings for the rotunda of the Capitol. The successors to Lieutenant Kinsley, as instructors of artillery, have been, Lieutenant *Robert Anderson*, from December 1st, 1835, to November 17th, 1837; and Lieutenant *Minor Knowlton*, from that date to the present time. Mr. Jumel was succeeded as sword-master, or instructor of fencing, by Ferdinand Dupare, February 16th, 1837; and James McAuley became the first instructor of riding, June 12th, 1839. Joseph Lucchesi succeeded Mr. Kyle as leader of the band; having been appointed April 1st, 1836, and this station he still continues to hold.

By an act of Congress for increasing the army, approved July 5th, 1838, it was provided, (§ 19,) "That an additional professor be appointed, to instruct in the studies of chemistry, mineralogy, and geology," and that the Secretary of War may assign to the said professor an assistant, to be taken from the officers of the line, or cadets, and to receive the same pay as the other assistant professors. By the 28th section of the same law, it was enacted, "That the term for which cadets hereafter admitted into the

Military Academy at West Point, shall engage to serve, be, and the same is hereby increased to eight years, unless [they be] sooner discharged." The acts of Congress making annual appropriations for the support of the Academy, and occasional appropriations for buildings and other purposes, we have not thought it necessary here to notice. A detachment of dragoons has recently been stationed at West Point, having arrived there June 12th, 1839. An opportunity is thus afforded for the cadets to exercise in horsemanship and cavalry tactics. For this great improvement in the course of military instruction, the Academy is, we believe, indebted to Mr. Poinsett, the Secretary of War.

The present regulations of the Military Academy, being voluminous, we shall not attempt here to transcribe. They are, for the most part, a digest and expansion of the different regulations already referred to; and which it has been our object to present respectively in their original form. It remains, however, to offer a brief view of the mechanism of the institution and its mode of action, as a summary of the preceding notices.

Besides the superintendent, professors, and teachers already named, there are attached to the Academy fourteen lieutenants of the army, as assistant professors or teachers, but receiving no other compensation than their regular army pay. The adjutant, quartermaster, paymaster, surgeon, and assistant surgeon of the Academy are also officers of the army detailed for these respective stations; and together constitute the *Military Staff* of the Academy. There are also attached to the Academy, a storekeeper, tailor, and shoemaker, who are required to supply the cadets with necessary articles, at the regulated prices. The principal professors and teachers of the Academy constitute an *Academic Board*, of which the superintendent is president, and which has the supervision of the studies, the selection of class books, library books, maps, models, and apparatus; and which decides on the merits of the cadets at the examinations. For this last purpose the first assistants in the principal departments, and the immediate teacher of the section under examination, constitute transiently a part of the Academic Board. The

Academic Staff comprehends all those officers who are engaged in giving instruction; in contradistinction from the Military Staff, already mentioned.

The number of candidates for admission is so great that early applications are made to the Secretary of War, by those desirous of obtaining an appointment as cadets. The number of cadets being nearly equal to that of the members of Congress, it is understood that there is generally one cadet from each congressional district, and that their nomination is in some degree confided to the respective members. The age of admission was restricted by a regulation, we believe in 1833, and is now from sixteen to twenty-one years inclusive; regard being also had to health, stature, and character. The acquirements necessary for admission, as established by law, are reading, writing, and practical arithmetic; though a knowledge of English grammar, geography, and even of the Latin language, is highly desirable and advantageous. To raise the standard of admission would be to exclude many young men of worth, whose early education has been ne-

glected, and to depress it would deprive the nation of such moderate qualifications as it has a right to expect, for the prosecution of important higher studies. The newly appointed cadets are required to join the Academy between the 1st and 20th of June; and they engage to serve eight years, or four years after graduating at the Academy. As opportunity is afforded for gratuitous instruction at the Academy from the 1st of June until the examination of the candidates near the close of the month, those who are imperfectly prepared would do well to be present during this period.

The months of June, July, and August, in each year, after the close of the examination, are devoted solely to military exercises; for which purpose the cadets leave the barracks, and encamp in tents on the plain, under the regular police and discipline of an army in time of war. Their organization varies occasionally, while drilling in particular arms; but for purposes of discipline, police, and the ordinary drills in infantry tactics, they are arranged as a battalion of four companies, under the commandant of the corps and his assistants; the corporals

being appointed from the cadets of the third class; the sergeants from those of the second; and the captains and lieutenants from those of the first or senior class. The other cadets fill the ranks as soldiers, though required to act as officers at stated times. They perform in rotation the duties of sentinels, or guard duty, night and day, during the encampment; but only in the evening and at meal-times when in barracks. They are drilled daily, during the greater portion of the year, except on Saturdays and Sundays, and several times a day, during the encampment either as artillery, infantry, riflemen, or cavalry troops, the riding exercises being continued through the whole year. They are thus practically taught the use of the musket or rifle, the cannon, mortar, and howitzer, the sabre and rapier, or broad and small sword; as also the construction of field works and the preparation of all kinds of munitions and materials for war. The morning parade during the encampment, and guard mounting throughout the remainder of the year, and the evening parade at *retreat* (or sunset), are highly imposing, especially as enlivened

by the excellent band of music. The cadets' uniform is a gray coatee with standing collar, bullet buttons gilt, and black silk cord; gray vest and pantaloons in winter, and white in summer, with white belts for the bayonet and cartridge box. The dress cap is of black felt, round crown, with black pompon, brass front plate, and eagle on the front of the cap. A forage cap is worn when off duty, and a guard cloak is provided for wet or cold weather. Cadets who have been present two encampments, are allowed, if their conduct be correct and their parents or guardians consent thereto, to be absent the third on furlough.

The cadets return from camp to barracks on the last of August; and the ceremony of striking the tents on this occasion is well worth an effort of the visiter to witness it. The remaining nine months of the academic year are devoted to study. The studies of the *first year*, or fourth class, are algebra, geometry, trigonometry, descriptive geometry, mensuration, and the French language. All the mathematical studies are practically taught, and applied to numerous problems not

found in the books; on the solution of which, greatly depends the reputation and standing of the rival candidates for pre-eminence. The studies of the *second year* are the theory of perspective and shades and shadows, practically illustrated; analytic geometry, with its application to conic sections; the integral and differential calculus, or science of fluxions; practical surveying; with the French language, geography, English grammar and rhetoric, and the elements of drawing, or the human figure in pen and pencil, and topography in plain tints, colours, and with the pen. This completes the course of mathematics, and also of French, which the cadets learn to translate freely, but which few of them can be expected to speak fluently. The *third year* is devoted to the course of natural and experimental philosophy, comprising mechanics in all its divisions; optics, magnetism, and electricity; and astronomy; together with chemistry, including the laws of heat, and practical applications; and the completion of the course of drawing, including landscapes in pencil and colours. The *fourth* and last *year* is appropriated to the review of artillery and

infantry tactics, the former including military pyrotechny; the science of war and fortification, or military engineering; a course of civil engineering, embracing architecture, the construction of roads and bridges, railroads and canals, with the improvement of rivers and harbours; a course of mineralogy and geology; a course of rhetoric, moral philosophy, and political science, including constitutional and international law. In most of these studies the classes are divided into sections, usually of about fifteen cadets in each; and each section has its own instructor. Thus each cadet is called upon at almost every recitation, to explain a considerable portion of the lesson. The written or delineated demonstrations, chiefly algebraic or geometrical, are explained at the black board in the presence of the whole section. The hours of study are from *reveillé* until breakfast time, at 7 o'clock, A. M.; from 8 o'clock, A. M., to dinner time, at 1 o'clock, P. M.; from 2 to 4 o'clock, P. M.; and from the call "*To quarters*," about one hour after sundown, until *taps*, at 10 o'clock, P. M., for which *tattoo*, at 9 o'clock, is the preparatory signal. The re-

citations vary from one hour and a half to one hour in length, and occur twice or thrice daily. When the interval from 4 o'clock, P. M., to sunset exceeds one hour and a half, it is devoted to military exercises, but the rest of the year to recreation.

The present^x text-books in use at the Academy are Mahan's Treatise on Field Fortification, with Lithographic Notes on Permanent Fortification, Attack and Defence, Mines and other accessories, the Composition of Armies, Strategy, &c.; Mahan's Course of Civil Engineering, with Notes on Architecture, Stone Cutting, and Machines; Rules and Regulations for the Exercise and Manœuvres of the United States Infantry; United States Artillery Tactics, Kinsley's Pyrotechny, Thiroux's Instruction Théorique et Pratique d'Artillerie, and Knowlton's Notes on Powder, Cannon, and Projectiles; Blair's Rhetoric, Paley's Moral Philosophy, Kent's Lectures, and Bayard's Exposition of the Constitution; Dana's Mineralogy, Bakewell's Geology, and Turner's Chemistry; Boucharlat's Mechanics, translated by Courtenay; Roget's Electricity and Magnetism; Bartlett's Optics;

Gummere's Astronomy; Davies' Descriptive Geometry, Surveying, Analytical Geometry, Calculus, Bourdon's Algebra, and Legendre's Geometry; Berard's French Grammar, *Leçons Françaises*, and *Gil Blas*; and Murray's Grammar and English Reader.

To test the progress of the cadets in their studies, there are held semi-annual examinations, commencing on the second day of January, unless it be Sunday, and on the second Monday of June; at the latter of which a Board of Visitors, invited by the Secretary of War, is present, to make a critical inspection and official report of the state of the Academy. Each of these examinations occupies about a fortnight, and is very strict, but still it is not considered as the sole test of merit. Each instructor makes a weekly class report, in which is recorded the daily performance of each cadet under his charge; those who do perfectly well being marked 3, or the maximum, and those who fail entirely in their recitation being marked 0; between which extremes there are nine intermediate grades of merit, having reference only to the members of that section; but transfers are freely

made between the higher and lower sections, according to individual merit. These marks are accessible to the cadets from week to week, and doubtless stimulate their exertions. They are summed up at the end of the term, and laid before the Academic Board and Board of Visitors; so that the standing of each cadet, depends not only on his personal examination but on all his previous recitations. A certain proficiency being required of the cadets, those who fall below this limit are either discharged from the service, or turned back to repeat the course of studies of that year with the succeeding class. Averaging the last ten years, we think, a class of about one hundred entering the academy, is reduced from want of inclination for the service and other causes, to about eighty at the end of six months; seventy at the end of one year, and sixty at the end of two years; about fifty, or one half of the whole number remaining to complete the course.

There is a general merit-roll of every class, made out at the end of each academic year; the merit of each cadet being expressed by a number denoting his relative proficiency or

acquirements. The final standing of each cadet, on which depends his relative rank for army promotion, is determined by the sum of his merit in all the different branches ; regard being had to their relative importance. This latter is at present estimated as follows ; Engineering and the Science of War, 300 ; Natural Philosophy, 300 ; Mathematics, 300 ; and Conduct, 300 ; Rhetoric and Moral and Political Science, 200 ; Chemistry and Mineralogy, 200 ; Infantry Tactics, 150 ; Artillery, 150 ; French, 100 ; and Drawing, 100. Hence the individual who should reach the maximum in all the branches would be credited with 2100 on the final merit-roll ; but such cases are of course extremely rare. The cadet in each class having the highest sum of merit is placed first on the roll, and so onward ; and he who is deficient to a certain extent even in the last year, is not permitted to graduate. In estimating the merit in conduct, every neglect of duty, or case of tardiness, being reported against a cadet, and not satisfactorily excused, is charged against him in the roll of *demerit*, with a number proportioned to its degree of *criminality*, as

fixed by the regulations. Hence the amount of demerit, on the academic records is not to be considered so much a test of moral as of military character. Each cadet, on graduating, receives a diploma signed by the Superintendent and members of the Academic Board; and his name is presented by the Inspector to the Secretary of War, with a recommendation for a commission in the army, which has in no case hitherto been refused.

The allowance to cadets for pay and rations, is \$28 per month; amply sufficient for their comfortable maintenance; including board and clothing, and the purchase of all the books, stationary, and other articles required for their academic course. They are liable to trial by either a garrison or general court-martial, and to any degree of punishment which martial law may prescribe. The use of ardent spirits or tobacco, and all games of chance are strictly forbidden; as also going beyond the limits of the post without permission, or being absent from quarters during the hours of study. Insubordination, and neglect of military duties, or disrespect

towards a superior officer, are among the more serious offences. The cadets are not only required to abstain from all vicious, immoral, or irregular conduct, but they are enjoined on every occasion to conduct themselves as becomes officers and gentlemen, on penalty of dismissal from the service. The inmates of each room or tent act in turn as orderlies; and the orderly for the time being is responsible for the police and good order of the room or tent, and for any violation of the regulations which may take place therein. Each room is also visited at least three times every day by the officer in charge, who is one of the assistant instructors of tactics; each performing this duty in his turn. Every cadet is required to attend divine service on the Sabbath, unless excused from duty by the surgeon; and if sick, he is comfortably provided for and attended. Under these and other subordinate regulations, we presume to say, that there is better order and less immoral conduct at West Point, than in almost any college in the United States.

The first buildings occupied by the cadets were of wood, erected we believe during the

Revolution, or at least as early as 1794, and demolished about the year 1817. They stood on the north side of the plain, at a short distance west of the new hotel. They were occupied originally by soldiers; afterwards by soldiers and cadets together; and finally by the cadets alone, until their removal to the new barracks, we believe in 1815. In 1812, as we should have before mentioned, the jurisdiction of 250 acres of land was ceded by New York to the United States, and in that year or the following, the building called the Academy, (recently burnt,) the mess-hall west of it, and the south barrack east of it, were commenced, but not finished until 1815. These three buildings formed a line crossing the southern part of the plain. The north barrack, a large building projecting into the plain, near the south barrack, and forming an L with the latter, was completed in 1817. Of the brick edifices on the west side of the plain, the one directly south, and the two next north of the mess-hall, were built in 1815-16; and the three most northern were constructed in 1820-21; in front of which are the flag-staff and parade ground. The

remaining brick building, next to the southernmost, and situated back from the street, was built we think in 1829. Of the three blocks of stone dwellings, at the northwest angle of the plain, on the road to the German Flats, the one farthest west was erected in 1821; the two others in 1825-6. These buildings front the north, and overlook Camptown, with its old magazine and arsenal, and the barrack erected for the musicians about 1828.

The hospital, at the extreme south end of the plain, and the hotel, at the opposite extremity on the north, fronting up the river, were built in 1828-9. The water-works, for supplying part of the buildings with water, and for extinguishing fires, were completed in 1830, at an expense of about \$4,500. The new chapel, southeast of the south barrack, was completed, we believe, in 1836; and the new Academy, south of the barracks, the basement story of which is used as an exercise hall for riding, &c., was finished, or nearly so, in 1838. The old academy, used formerly as a chapel, and which contained the library and apparatus, was destroyed by fire in February, 1838; but most of the books

and instruments were saved. A new stone building, of superior construction, is now in progress, situated east of the new academy, for containing the library and for astronomical and other purposes. The library is well selected, chiefly of military, scientific, and historical works, comprising nearly ten thousand volumes. The apparatus, both philosophical and chemical, is quite extensive, and embraces the latest improvements.

The monument on a small hillock near the flag-staff, is a cenotaph erected by the late General Brown to the memory of Colonel *Eleazar D. Wood*. The beautiful monument in the West Point Cemetery, on a romantic point about a mile north of the Academy, at the eastern angle of the German Flats, was erected by the corps of cadets, in 1817, to the memory of Vincent M. Lowe, of New York, who was killed by the accidental discharge of a cannon in that year. It was done at the suggestion of his friends of the Amosaphic Society, and at an expense of about twelve hundred dollars. His funeral oration was delivered by Robert Emmet, son of Thomas Addis Emmet, who was then at the

Academy, and is now a professor in the University of Virginia. The monument is a conic frustum, surmounted by military emblems; and, from being inscribed with the names of other cadets who have died at the Academy, it is known as the Cadets' Monument. The Cemetery, which commenced with this monument, is beautifully situated, half surrounded with groves, yet overlooking the river; and in its calm seclusion, can hardly be visited without exciting the most solemn emotions.

The other monument, over the levelled redoubt or citadel of Fort Clinton, at the northeast angle of the plain, is sacred to *Kosciuszko*. It was first suggested and advocated by Cadet Henry St. James Linden, we believe in 1825, and completed in 1829, at the expense of the Corps of Cadets, its cost being about five thousand dollars. An oration was written for the occasion by Cadet Charles Petigru, of South Carolina. The monument is a Doric column, resting on a lofty pedestal, with appropriate Grecian ornaments. It bears no other inscription than the name of Poland's hero, whose memory is so dear to Americans,

and so closely interwoven with the early reminiscences of West Point. The monument was designed by John H. Latrobe, Esq., of Baltimore, a pupil, but not a graduate of the Academy. The surplus of the fund raised for this purpose was expended in improving the access to a romantic spot on the east side of the plain, a shelf of the rocky precipice, known as Kosciuszko's Garden, from its having been his favourite resort while engaged on the fortifications at this place.

The Academy has been for many years provided with a Literary Society, similar to those in our colleges, for the improvement of the cadets in literary and classical acquirements. The *Amosophic Society* was organized in May, 1816, for "improvement in debate, composition, and recitation," or declamation. It embraced at first about twenty-five members, and subsequently, in its best days, about fifty. Among its early members were the lamented Vincent M. Lowe and Professor Emmet, already mentioned. Benjamin Vining was its first president, and as such, delivered the first address before it. This society existed till about 1823, and had collected a library

of nearly 500 volumes. Meanwhile, about 1822, a new society was formed called the Philomathean, in which the Amosophic Society appears to have been merged in the following year.

From the union of the Philomathean Society with another of short duration, called the Ciceronian, as we are informed, sprang the *Dialectic Society*, which was founded, we believe, in the winter of 1824-5, and has continued to flourish to the present time. Among its early and active members were Leonidas Polk, now Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Arkansas, and Charles Mason, now Chief Justice of Iowa Territory. The office of Reader of anonymous compositions was established in 1828, and first filled by Joseph Ritner, Junior, an excellent and distinguished member, since deceased. An able address was delivered before this society, December 29th, 1838, by Lieutenant Alvord, in commemoration of the officers who fell in battle in Florida. The Dialectic Society has collected a library of several hundred volumes, chiefly of historical and classical works; and we think has a very favourable influence on

the character and acquirements of those cadets whom it receives as members. A Lyceum of Natural History existed for several years at the Academy; but was dissolved by a vote of its members in 1831; its minerals being presented to the Academic Cabinet, and its books to the Dialectic Society.

We proceed finally to state the recent objections which have been made to the Military Academy, and to offer a brief reply. On the 26th of November, 1833, the Legislature of Tennessee passed Resolutions in favour of abolishing the Academy; saying, "a few young men, sons of distinguished and wealthy families, through the intervention of members of Congress, are educated at this institution at the expense of the great body of the American people, which entitle them to privileges, and elevate them above their fellow-citizens, who have not been so fortunate as to be educated under the patronage of this aristocratical institution." On the 3d of March, 1834, similar Resolutions were passed by the Legislature of Ohio, saying that the Academy "is partial in its operations, and

wholly inconsistent with the spirit and genius of our liberal institutions." It was in reply to these Resolutions, that an able Report was made to the House of Representatives, May 17th, 1834, by Colonel Richard M. Johnson, as Chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs; vindicating the institution against these charges, showing how fully it has been approved by all our leading statesmen, from Washington downwards, and how substantially it has repaid the country for her maternal care and support. But this institution was destined to pass another ordeal, when, on the 1st of March, 1837, a virulent Report against it was presented to the House of Representatives, by the Honourable F. O. J. Smith, of Maine, Chairman of the Select Committee of Nine, appointed to investigate the condition of the United States Military Academy. This Report concluded by recommending the abolition of the Academy, and the establishment of a School of Practice in its stead; for reasons which it is our present purpose to examine.

It is objected that the cadets at the Academy are not a part of the efficient force of

the army. In denial of this assertion, we may quote the very language of the law of 1812, as quoted by Mr. Wirt, in proving that the cadets are subject to courts-martial. They are subject to do duty, whenever, and wherever, and whatever the President shall direct; and they would at any time be fit and ready for duty, even on the battle-field, like the youthful Polytechnists of Paris, did occasion require it. If they are not an efficient part of the army, it is in the same sense that soldiers newly recruited, or citizen officers newly appointed, are not efficient, until they have acquired the requisite knowledge and experience. If the number of cadets were more than the public service requires, as has been objected, the remedy would be to reduce the academy, not to destroy it; but this objection does not at present hold good, in point of fact. The objection that the graduates are not under obligation to continue in the service, was obviated in a reasonable degree by the law of July 5th, 1838, requiring them to serve four years after graduating; and if this be not sufficient, it rests with Congress to extend the

period of service, as far as the nation may see fit to require.

The objection most relied on, against educating the cadets at the public expense, would apply equally against instructing recruits of any grade, or paying them any thing until they should be thoroughly drilled and completely efficient. This answers also the constitutional objection against the right of Congress to establish a seminary of education. The cadets are not merely students, but a grade of officers on duty, as much so as if they were dispersed through all the posts and garrisons; but learning that duty ten times as well as they could thus learn it, and at much less expense than if instructed after being commissioned as lieutenants; when their pay would be more than twice as great. They learn it too far more thoroughly and uniformly than if taught at private schools, military or civil, as the result of more than one rival institution abundantly testifies. No fewer than *thirty-one* gentlemen, all but six of whom are graduates of the Academy, are employed in instructing two hundred and sixty cadets. What other in-

stitution in our country could present any thing like the same amount of suitable instruction to candidates for army promotion?

This introduces another objection, that the expense of educating the cadets is exorbitant, especially as compared with the expenses at our best colleges. In answer to this, we have only to state, that the current expenses of the institution, including the pay and rations of the cadets, amount to about \$100,000; and dividing this sum by 250, the average number of cadets, we have the annual expense of each cadet, equal to \$400 per annum; which, contrasted with college expenses for travelling, boarding, tuition, fuel, books, and clothing, is we think by no means unfavourable to the Military Academy, considering the number and qualifications of its instructors. We may add, that this expense is far less than would be that of the scheme recommended by the Hon. Mr. Smith, of ordering nearly one third of the company officers of the army to West Point, when converted into a School of Practice; especially as those officers would not then be a part of the efficient force of the army, as the phrase is un-

derstood by Mr. Smith. But what are a few dollars, more or less, compared with the importance of having a body of select and thoroughly educated officers, to take the command of our armies, and direct our fortifications and national improvements?

The objection that only the sons of influential and wealthy men are admitted to the Academy, is far from being true; but even were it the case, the fault would be not in the Academy, but in those who are vested with the power of making the appointments thereto. Hence it would not be remedied by abolishing the Academy; since the Executive would then appoint as lieutenants those who are now appointed as cadets; or rather, it would appoint a more favoured class of young men, already tolerably educated. As regards the Academy itself, even its most violent opponents, on the successive Boards of Visitors, have admitted that nothing could be more just and impartial than its awards of academic honours and censures. It is not strange that many of those who are discharged should find fault with its strictness; but it is surely just that

the country should select those who are deemed best qualified, and not be required to educate and commission all who may be admitted on the recommendation of partial friends. Though they may possess latent talents, and may afterwards distinguish themselves, still the Academic Staff must judge them by their present industry and acquirements, without waiting for the future.

Much has been said against the moral tendency of the education acquired at West Point, but we think with great injustice. The argument drawn from the conduct-rolls is perfectly futile; where to appear on parade with a rusty gun lock, is charged, and properly so, as a military crime. We appeal with confidence to the subsequent career of a great majority of the graduates, as disproving this charge; and we assert that since the Academy became settled under the present régime, there have been fewer disturbances there than at our colleges, generally speaking. But in strictness, the comparison should be made not with the character of our colleges, but with the character which young officers would be likely to acquire without an educa-

tion at the Academy; and in this point of view, the result need not be stated.

Another of the objections is, that the graduates of the Military Academy, being entitled to precedence in filling vacancies in the army, all citizens above the age of twenty-one are virtually almost excluded from entering the service, and that no inducement is left for the general acquisition of military knowledge, "nor for the institution of *military schools*," elsewhere.^a But allowing that fifty appointments are to be made annually in the army; we ask how many private military schools this inducement would foster and support? or if only one or two, we ask in what respect these would be preferable to the National Academy; and whether the appointment of graduates from such institutions, who would necessarily be sons only of the wealthy, would not be an act of greater favouritism than that which has been unjustly urged against West Point?

It is said that the commanders of our army in cases of emergency, will be men inspired

^a Mr. Smith's Report, p. 30.

with military genius and energy springing up with the occasion, and not the graduates of the Military Academy. But we ask who will be more likely to be thus inspired, than those who voluntarily sought the profession of arms in their youth, and have devoted their lives to its acquirement? It is still more strongly urged that the militia of our country will not submit to be commanded by these graduates, and that either they will refuse to enlist, "or the earliest discharges of their musketry will be to rid themselves of their obnoxious commandants, and to devolve the duty of command upon some more congenial comrade."^a Can such be the language of an American citizen, and member of Congress? Is it justified in the least degree by facts? Take, for instance, the Florida war. If there has been any fault in its management, it should be remembered that the chief commanders there were heroes of the war of 1812, but not graduates of the Academy. Has there been any collision between the militia and the officers from West Point, in

^a Mr. Smith's Report, p. 28.

all this trying service? We believe none, absolutely none; but on the contrary, entire harmony and respect. Far be it from us, however, to disparage the merits of the commanders in Florida, who, we sincerely believe, have done all that was in their power, with the means and materials afforded them, to terminate that harassing war, if war it deserves to be called. But we can by no means believe that an officer who receives a regular military education, thereby forfeits the confidence or sympathies of his fellow-citizens of the militia. As to the privileges which the graduates are accused of possessing, we know of none but that of serving their country in the army, and receiving a superior education to fit them for this service.

The last objection which we have been enabled to discover, and the one which remains to be noticed is, that the academy has failed to accomplish the objects for which it was established; and therefore should be abolished. An attempt is made to prove this by a reference to General Bernard and Colonel McRee's statement, in 1819, that the "school at West Point has hitherto been

very inferior as such, and altogether inadequate to the objects for which it was established." But their farther statement, that "A project has been presented, to place this school upon the footing of the most perfect of the kind that exists," the objector has not seen fit to notice. Their object was to recommend the establishment of a School of Practice, not as a substitute for the academy, but as a supplement to it; to perfect the knowledge therein acquired. In time of peace, when the young officers would otherwise be scattered at the remote posts, and the troops be dispersed by companies, a school of practice is doubtless highly desirable, and even necessary; but in time of war, when armies are wanted in the field, *they* are the only school of practice then needed. If such a school be an elementary one, it is only a military academy under another name; but this was not the idea of General Bernard and Colonel McRee, who intended that it should bear the same relation to the West Point Academy, that the French School of Practice at Metz, bears to the Polytechnic School.

Turning from authorities on this point, we

appeal to facts, in proof of the efficiency and utility of the Military Academy. The whole number of graduates prior to the year 1813, was only 88; and of this number no fewer than eleven were breveted, during the war of 1812, for distinguished services, five of whom are at present colonels or lieutenant-colonels in the army. Of the corps of engineers during that war, all those commissioned prior to 1812, including all the higher officers, were graduates of the Academy. "Not to speak of others, it was *McRee*, who on the field of Bridgewater suggested the expediency of that perilous but well-timed order, whose successful execution," [by the gallant Miller,] "turned the tide of battle;—and to him and to *Wood*, who fell at the head of his column in the sortie from Fort Erie,—may justly be ascribed much of the glory of that memorable campaign."^a We believe that the first successful sortie of an American garrison against a besieging army, was that of Fort Erie, and that this was first suggested and planned by Colonel Wood, who fell so

^a Hon. Mr. Butler's Address, p. 27.

bravely during its successful execution. Captain Ketchum, who captured the British General Ryall, at the battle of Bridgewater, was also a graduate of the Military Academy. We may also add, that the success of the battle of Plattsburg was due, in no small degree, to the skilful and energetic efforts of Colonel Totten, in fortifying the banks of the Saranac, while awaiting the enemy; General Macomb, the commander-in-chief, having also been one of the first students of the Academy. Colonel Thayer's successful arrangements for the defence of Norfolk, have already been referred to, but should here be recalled to mind. Of the first eighty-eight graduates, nine fell in battle during the war of 1812; eight of whom are not included among the brevets already mentioned. Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Eleazer D. Wood, of the engineers, Colonel James Gibson, of the rifle regiment, and Captain Alexander J. Williams, of the artillery, fell at Fort Erie, in 1814; the latter we believe at the assault by which it was taken from the British, and the two former at the sortie by which it was afterwards successfully defended. Lieute-

nant Samuel B. Rathbone fell at Queenston Heights, in 1812; Lieutenant Henry A. Hobart, at Fort George, in 1813; Lieutenant George Ronan, at Chicago, in 1812; Lieutenants Henry Burchstead and Joseph N. Wilcox, at Fort Mimms, in 1812; and Lieutenant William W. Smith, at Christler's Farm, in 1813.

The whole number of graduates of the Military Academy, from its first establishment to 1840, inclusive, is 1058; of whom, according to the last official register, 396 remain in the military service, besides the graduating class of 1840. If to these be added the graduates now in the civil service of the United States, as engineers or assistants on the fortifications, coast survey, and improvement of rivers and harbours, it will be found that there still remain in the public service nearly one half of all the graduates of the Military Academy, at the end of forty years from its first establishment; while no fewer than one hundred and seventy-four of the remainder have died in service or been killed in battle. When it is added that the appointments in the two regiments of dragoons were

mostly conferred on citizens, thereby disappointing reasonable hopes of promotion, and introducing many citizens into the service, the fact that about two thirds of all the officers now in the army, the whole number of which, exclusive of the medical, pay, and purchasing departments, is six hundred and thirty, are graduates of the Military Academy, is alone a proof, we think, that this institution has not failed of its object. "Our whole army," says Colonel Johnson, in his Report, "possesses now far more of the public respect and confidence than it did not many years since. It is the great distinction of the Academy at West Point, that it has contributed largely and effectually to this elevation of the character of the military establishment." More might be quoted, and from various sources, in praise of this institution; but we forbear.

In the Florida war, out of fifteen officers killed in battle, ten were graduates of the Military Academy. Captain George W. Gardiner, and Lieutenants William E. Basinger, Robert R. Mudge, Richard Henderson, and John L. Keais, all of the artillery, fell together

at the bravely fought, but unfortunate battle in which Major Dade's command was slain, December 28th, 1835. Lieutenant James F. Izard, of the dragoons, was mortally wounded when in command of the advanced guard of General Gaines's army, near the Withlacoochee river, February 29th, 1836. Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander R. Thompson, Captain Joseph Van Swearingen, and Lieutenants Francis J. Brooke and John P. Center, all of the infantry, fell at the victorious battle of Okeechobee, December 25th, 1837. Captain Samuel L. Russell, and Lieutenant W. Hulbert, both of the infantry, were killed by the Indians in 1839; the former near Fort Dallas, on the 28th of February, and the latter at Mile Creek, on the 2d of May. But the officers killed in battle are only a small portion of those who have been sacrificed, through sickness from exposure, fatigue, or privation, during this unfortunate war. In the words of a distinguished senator, on the floor of Congress, "Officers and men have fought it out where they were told to fight; they have been killed in the tracks where they were told to stand. In no one of our Indian wars have

our troops so stood together, and conquered together, and died together, as they have done in this one; and this standing together is the test of the soldier's character." Witness the dying words of Basinger, "*I am the last officer left,—men! we will do the best we can;*"—and of the gallant Thompson, "*Keep steady, men! Charge the hammock! Remember the regiment to which you belong!*"^a If these are indications of inefficiency in the graduates of the Military Academy, we have nothing more to offer in their behalf.

We conclude this imperfect sketch of the history of West Point, with the following lines, written by a lady, gifted of the Muses, on visiting this interesting spot.

Bright are the memories linked with thee,
 Boast of a glory-hallowed land!
 Hope of the valiant and the free,—
 Home of their youthful soldier-band!
 Not pilgrim at earth's shrines of pride,
 When fancy's wand the past unveiled,
 E'er bent the heart to feeling's tide,
 E'er thrilled as those who thee have hailed.

^a See Lieutenant Alvord's address, p. 49, 50.

Proud smiles each spirit-haunted height,
 Like Guardian Genius of the wave ;
 And bathed in sunset's dying light,
 Thou seem'st th' Elysium of the brave ! . . .
 Dearer to us yon mountain's steep,
 Where moss-veiled ruins darkly rise,
 Dearer that turf where proud ones sleep,
 Than all that lures 'neath eastern skies.

Home of the gallant brave—farewell !
 Long mayst thou shine, thy country's boast,—
 Her bulwark when strong tempests swell,—
 Her beacon, should all hope seem lost !
 Long may her sons,—the prized, the true,—
 Be mid thy scenes to glory fired,
 Here bathe the soul in wisdom's dew,
 Be here by genius' light inspired.

N O T E.

SINCE the principal part of the preceding sketch was put to press, the writer has been favoured with a letter from General Swift, in reply to a note of inquiry, addressed to that gentleman, the answer to which was delayed by his absence from home. It contains so much valuable information, that its insertion here will, it is hoped, be pardoned by its author, and will surely gratify those interested in the history of West Point. General Swift states as follows:

“Not only from July, 1812, to January, 1815, but also to July, 1817, and indeed to November, 1818, I was, as the law prescribes, the Superintendent of the Academy; for the Chief Engineer had no power to divest himself of the responsibilities of that office. The dates, January, 1815, and July, 1817, have reference to official but not statute rule, and were to give the Chief Engineer the functions of Inspector, and the officer detailed to reside at West Point that of Superintendent. The senior officer of engineers, (not being the chief,) present at the Point, was considered the temporary superintendent, pending the absence

of the chief, and especially so from 1812 to 1817, at which last date, the Secretary of War, Mr. Calhoun, introduced the since efficient rule of inspection. The duty of the Superintendent, early in the existence of the Military Academy, was also that of an instructor; but after 1808, the functions of the Chief Engineer became more those of a commandant and inspector.

“The Superintendent, from November, 1816, to January, 1817, was especially ordered by the President, for the twofold purposes, 1st, of separating the Chief Engineer from service with a Foreign Engineer, in consequence of remonstrance against the impolitic interpolation into the corps that produced the resignation of the chief in 1818; and 2d, to reform certain abuses alleged to have arisen at West Point. In January, 1817, that officer was ordered to Washington, and Captain Partridge left in temporary superintendence, in which, by order of said chief, he was superseded by Major Thayer, in July of that year.

“George Baron was the *first superintendent*, and the first Professor of Mathematics at the Military Academy in 1801. He was succeeded by Major Williams, in December, 1801. When said Baron was dismissed, in February, 1802, Captain William A. Barron, of the corps of engineers, was his successor, and continued professor of mathematics until 1807, when Professor Hassler took that chair, and continued until 1810, when Captain Partridge, the then assistant professor, discharged the duty until 1813. Captain Mansfield, the first Professor of Philosophy, 1802,

with Professor Barron, signed the first diploma granted at the Military Academy, in 1802. In 1806, the philosophical chair was vacated by the absence of Professor Mansfield, who, as surveyor-general of Ohio, remained absent until 1812. In reference to Mr. Crozet, he was, by permission of the Secretary of War, at the request of General Swift, introduced, in 1816, as assistant professor of Engineering; and at the instance of the same officer, was appointed professor in 1817.

“Major George Fleming had been, for many years prior to 1800, military storekeeper at West Point; and, during the Revolutionary War, had been stationed at that place. When General Swift was a cadet there, Major Fleming often mentioned that the fort and the stone barrack on Constitution Island, were erected and occupied by the Connecticut Line, at the same time that similar works and barracks were being constructed at West Point, save Fort Clinton, which was commenced at a later period on a plan made by General Duportail, who also commenced Fort Putnam; which latter work was discontinued, and subsequently recommenced in 1792, but left unfinished. According to Major Fleming’s account, Kosciuszko’s Garden was made by that Polish officer, who formed a fountain in the garden, the ruins of which Lieutenant Macomb and Cadet Swift discovered, and repaired the whole in 1802.

“In the year 1794, at the recommendation of General Washington, a military school was commenced at

West Point, and the building stood on the margin of the hollow northwest from the present site of the ice-house, and was burnt down by an incendiary in 1796, with its contents of books and apparatus. The school was suspended until 1801."

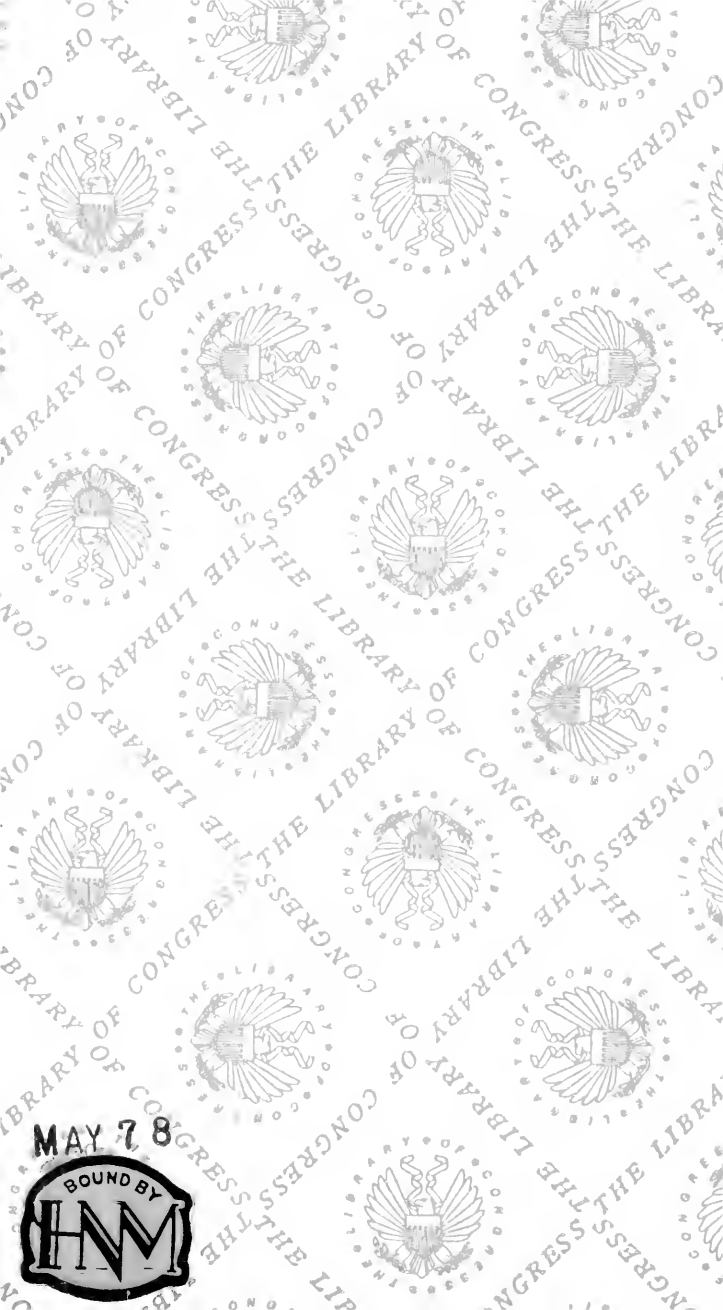
To those gentlemen who have kindly assisted the writer, by furnishing information for the preceding pages, he would, in conclusion, express his sincere acknowledgments; and should any errors be discovered in the work, he will be alike indebted for their correction or for any additional information relating to the subject of his labour, cheerfully and voluntarily attempted, though of necessity imperfectly performed.

THE END.









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